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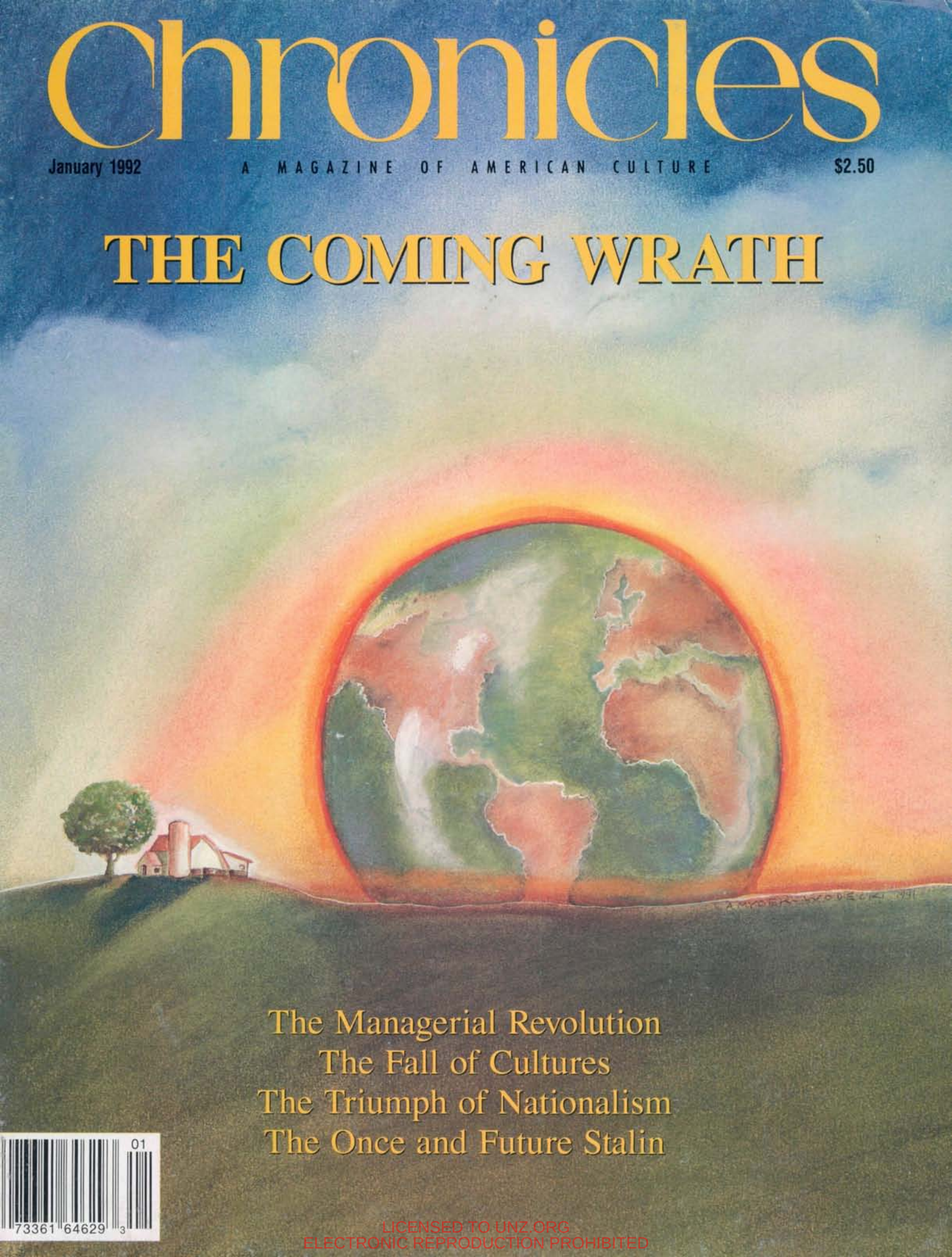

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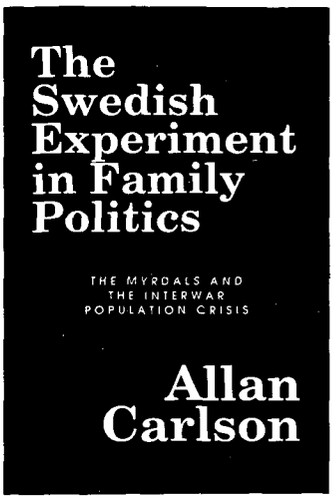

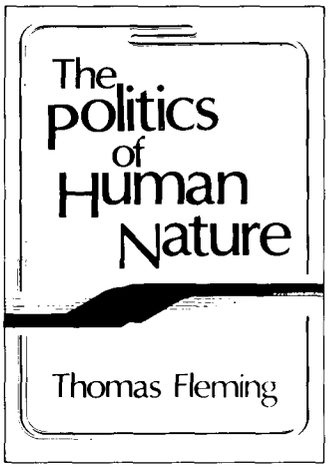

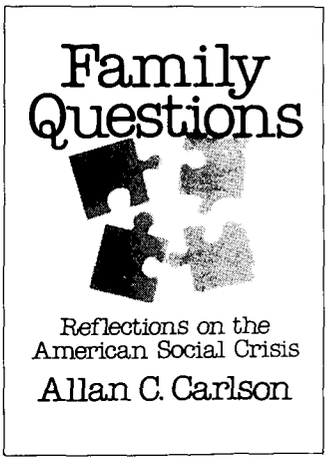

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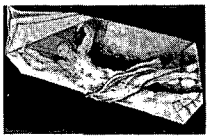

Flies Trapped in Honey by Thomas Fleming 10
Cultural diabetes—our national malady.

VIEWS

Prophet Sustained by Samuel Francis 14

James Burnham and the managerial revolution.

Totalitarianism With a Capitalist Face 19
by Andrei Navrozov

The progress of dictatorship in the Soviet Union.

The Decline and Splendor of Nationalism 22
by Tomislav Sunic

A key to understanding the political future of the West.

Regression and Renewal by Harold O.J. Brown 26

The prophecies of Pitirim Sorokin.

OPINIONS

Magna Mater, Full of Grace! by Chilton Williamson, Jr. 30
Max Oelschlaeger: *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology.*
The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold, edited by Susan L. Flader and J. Baird Callicott.
Deep ecology and the future of the environmental movement.

The Spirit of the Age by Matthew Scully 33
Lewis H. Lapham: *Imperial Masquerade: Essays by Lewis H. Lapham.* Assessing who got what in the 1980's.

REVIEWS

James Hitchcock recommends David Walsh's *After Ideology* ◆ Stephen Clark's *A Parliament of Souls* reestablishes philosophy on firmer ground, argues **E. Christian Kopff** ◆ Thomas Reeves' *A Question of Character* separates the facts from the fiction of the JFK legacy, writes **William Murchison** ◆ **J.O. Tate** praises Fred Hobson's *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World* ◆ Mary Edwards Wertsch's *Military Brats* hits the mark, says **Gregory McNamee** ◆ 35

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Cape Breton Island: The New Utopians by Jigs Gardner 40

Letter From the Lower Right: Space Invaders: Part II by John Shelton Reed 42

VITAL SIGNS

Scouting and Sin: The Case Against the Boy Scouts by William Grigg 44

Running the Psychosocial Gauntlet: The Bureaucracy of Getting Married by Anne Marie Morgan 46

My Aunt & Unamuno 48
by Ralph de Toledano

DEPARTMENTS

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES 4

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS 5

POETRY
Pets 13
by John Nixon, Jr.
Going to Ground 29
by David R. Slavitt

ON THE COVER

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 16, No. 1 January 1992

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On 'Islam'

Tomislav Sunic's ("The Gulf Crisis in Europe," May 1991) proposal of an Islamic conversion for neo-pagan Western Europe as some type of alternative cultural synthesis is an eyebrow raiser. But to state that the Moslem religion's "record of zeal and intolerance is no worse than that of other monotheistic beliefs" is a denial of the historical evidence. The Eastern Orthodox Church has a liturgical calendar full of martyrs, and a long history of suffering as a direct result of excessive Islamic "zeal and intolerance." Volumes can and have been written (see *New Martyrs of the Turkish Yoke*, St. Nectarios Press, Seattle, 1985) on the subject. There is no correlative behavior to be found on the Christian side.

In an Islamic society, Christians are effectively second-class citizens. Such has been the case in the Middle East for centuries and so it continues to be now in modern Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon. For a Moslem to convert to Christ has been a crime punishable by death throughout Moslem history for the most part. An Islamic majority in Western Europe can eventually be expected to attempt to root out from it the last vestiges of Christian culture. What traditional European culture would look like then can be witnessed in Turkish-occupied northern Cyprus today.

—*The Reverend Alexander Fecanin*
Old Forge, PA

Mr. Sunic Replies:

I did not mean to belittle the important role of Christianity, nor in any way suggest that the Eastern Orthodox Church may be inferior to Islam. But it is difficult to deny that Christian churches also knew their own spectacular hit parade of violence—*ad majorem Dei gloriam*—which at times paralleled or eclipsed Islamic intolerance towards Christians. Surely, one must agree that unlike Islam, Christian churches have discovered more rapidly human rights, democracy, ecumenism, and, last but not least, the secular theology of the big buck. But all Christian religions, including Eastern Orthodoxy, at some point in their history, practiced discrimination and genocide against a wide number of "infidels." Mircea Eliade was not incorrect when he wrote that "the intolerance and fanaticism of the prophets and missionaries is the hallmark of all the three monotheist religions." The *alterophobia* of Islam towards Christians during the Turkish or Tartar Yoke was soon recompensed by the intolerance of Christian Orthodoxy, under the banner of destructive pan-Slavism, against Turkic peoples, Jews, Catholic Poles, Lithuanians, etc.

We all tend to exonerate our religions from historical scrutiny, and we all resort to the convenient "spirit of our time" strategy in justifying our own religious aberrations. For a change, I would suggest to the Reverend Fecanin, T.R. Glover's *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* (1909), which documents the crimes committed by former Christian martyrs against pagans, who, just a century earlier made Christians look like martyrs. Also a good reference is Ralph W. Scott's *A New Look at Biblical Crime* (1979).

On 'South Africa'

In my recent editorial on South Africa (Cultural Revolutions, August 1991), there is a sentence that reads: "There was also a marked increase in attacks ignored by the Johannesburg *police*." It should have read, ". . . attacks on town-councillors and off-duty black policemen, largely ignored by the Johannesburg *press* except for occasional reports."

My typing of "police" for "press" is a typo I regret, since I respect the South African police, they were courteous and helpful to me, and they carry the brunt of de Klerk's ambiguity. The sentence as it should have read represents a summary of a report by the South African Institute of Race Relations that had made a deep impression on South Africa during the days I was there.

—*Leo Raditsa*
Florence, Italy

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WHEN CLARENCE THOMAS, our newest Supreme Court Justice, asked to be sworn in a week before the official ceremony, so he could go on the payroll early, it summed up the whole affair for me. Why are conservatives cheering his ascent to the judicial oligarchy? Yes, it's fun to beat liberal senators, but not with a virtual ringer for one of their guys. Here was one of the most privileged characters in modern American society moaning about discrimination. He lofted through private school, Holy Cross College, Yale Law School, and increasingly important posts in the Reagan and Bush administrations, and to the Supreme Court itself at the age of 42. Why? As everyone knows but refuses to say, because of his race.

Justice Thomas is not only a racial victimologist, but a pre-1975 liberal. In his first set of hearings, for example, Thomas traduced the South of his youth, calling it "totalitarian," and whined about what a tough life he'd had because of his "black skin." Because of racism, his grandfather was called "boy," and his family had an "unworkable and unusable" outhouse.

The old South was one of the most courteous societies on Earth. Especially in interracial dealings, people were punctilious. That doesn't mean some boor didn't insult his grandfather, only that it wouldn't have been the norm. As to the outhouse, a fixture for many white and black Southerners of the time, there is only one way it can become "unworkable and unusable": when nobody cleans it out. The condition of the Thomas family outhouse was not the white man's fault.

When he wasn't discussing the plumbing, Thomas repudiated the endorsements of private property his ghostwriters had prepared for him, and called "the self-evident fact that all men are created equal" the "central notion of our regime." Earlier, he had written that we should impose "inherent equality" through "aggressive enforcement of the civil rights laws and equal employment opportunity laws." Which begs the question: if equality is inherent, why does it need to be enforced? In fact, it is self-evident that men are not created equal — in intelligence, attractiveness, will, talent, vigor, parents, opportunities, etc. The great principle of the human race is radical *in*equality. As Ludwig von Mises pointed out, inequality is what makes the division of labor and society itself possible. If we were identical, there would be no comparative advantage and no reason to cooperate.

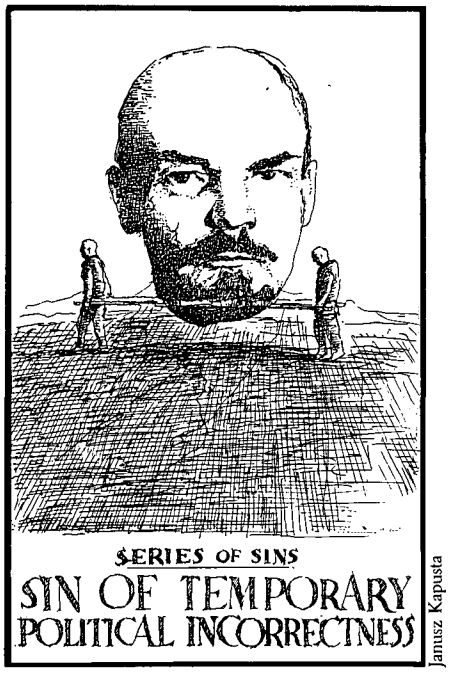
Thomas also claimed, under oath, never to have talked about *Roe* v. *Wade*. Conservatives who were outraged by Joe Biden's plagiarism thought Thomas's perjury was charming: his lying was justified to attain power. Thomas's lack of intellectual footprints also seemed untroubling to many conservatives. The *Washington Post* reported that on a courtesy visit to Senator Howard Metzenbaum (Democrat-Ohio), Thomas was asked about natural law. "Senator," he said, "do you believe it's right for one human being to own another?" "No," said Metzenbaum. "Well, that's natural law." "Can a person own an animal?" asked Metzenbaum. Thomas said he would have to check the natural law authorities on that toughie. Yet the "conservative" Thomas was endorsed by the *Washington Post* because he would bring "diversity to the court": he was raised by the "functionally illiterate."

Thomas's way was made smooth. Then came the 11th-hour speedbump: "sexual harassment." It's not often that I feel I'm getting my money's worth from the federal government, but that weekend I did. Who was telling the truth? Law professor Anita Hill, who claimed Thomas had crudely propositioned her when she had worked for him? Or Thomas, who furiously denied the charge?

One theory is that both were telling the truth, and both were lying, i.e., that they had an affair. That would be why Thomas promoted her at the civil rights office of the Department of Education, and why he demoted her at EEOC when he replaced her with what he described as a "lighter-skinned woman." It would explain why at the time he drove Hill home at night, stopped in "for an hour or so," and why he set up her stereo. This relationship would explain why the Oral Roberts law school dean said they were so friendly at breakfast, "laughing" and "laughing at laughing." It would also explain her telephone calls to him over the years, which only ceased with what were probably sarcastic congratulations on his marriage.

Under this scenario, Thomas might have made the famous remarks, but as his version of sexual banter to his mistress. Even if it wasn't banter, however, verbal sexual harassment shouldn't be a federal case, for First Amendment and other reasons. But it is wrong. And surely if federal regulations are to be applied to anyone, it should be to the federal officials who created them, Clarence Thomas among them, with special force.

At work (if I may use that word about D.C.), Hill said Thomas would tell her tales of the dirty movies he had watched the night before, usually involving orgies or bestiality. Some Yale



Janusz Kapusta

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Law School classmates claimed that animals had always interested the judge. In the mornings at New Haven, they said, he would deliver an impromptu colloquium on last night's flick (and Flicka). Thomas refused to answer questions about his alleged interest in pornography, and the senators —caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of the feminists and the blacks —didn't dare ask. *Newsweek*, however, reported that a prominent newspaper (the *Washington Post*) is sitting on a computer listing of Thomas's video rentals. They are rank stuff. When Robert Bork's rental records were published in the *Post*, he was found to be a man of taste. Do even Thomas's most ardent supporters think that about him?

Yet it was all, claimed Thomas in his prepared testimony, a "high-tech lynching for uppity blacks who deign to think for themselves." Thomas was —as usual—using race to advance himself. Few noticed that he didn't know the meaning of "deign," as few noticed when Senator Alan Simpson (Republican-Wyoming) quoted *Othello* to Thomas, about "Who steals my purse steals trash; . . . But he that filches from me my good name . . . ," that the words were spoken to deceive, by that master of deception, Iago.

Thomas accused his enemies of using a racially bigoted stereotype of black male sexuality, but no one called black moviemaker Spike Lee to testify, although his work seems to be filled with these same bigoted stereotypes. To the trumpeted delight of the White House, black public opinion, mildly pro-Thomas before, swung heavily to his side when he charged racism, no matter how absurdly.

Some saw Hill as telling tales out of school. "For us black people, anything that occurs within the race, whether in the workplace, within our families or private lives, it's a deeply personal and private affair," UCLA law professor Kim Crenshaw told the *Los Angeles Times*. "For that to be made so very public is a sense of violation of our collective privacy." "If black folks keep telling on one another, the black man will never get ahead," said D.C. businessman Irvin Johnson.

After watching Thomas's defense, however, constitutional lawyer Bruce Fein came to a different conclusion: that the "nomination should be rejected" because of the temperament he displayed. Indeed, it's tough to think of Antonin Scalia reacting in the same way. And according to John Elvin of the *Washington Times*, some legal officials found Thomas to be "obnoxious, arrogant, rude, and impolite."

The White House contended that the hearings were a trial, and Thomas should be confirmed unless he were found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. But that's nonsense. Thomas was up for a lifetime appointment to one of the highest offices. Any reasonable doubt should have defeated him. (One reason the debate was so hot was the stakes: a lifetime appointment. Strict term limitations make sense for federal judges.)

By using racial racketeering to confirm Thomas, to the cheers of conservatives, the White House may have changed the Republican Party. The first fruit was Bush's endorsement of the antiproperty, antibusiness Civil Rights Act of 1991. It may also have changed the conservative movement. Only five senators voted against this horrendous bill. Any opposition to similar scams will now be unrespectable.

Clarence Thomas may be an improvement on *Roe* v. *Wade*, although I'm not holding my breath. But on race privilege, the problem he was supposed to be nominated to combat, he will indeed be another Thurgood Marshall. And just like the appointment of Jack Kemp to HUD, we now have another conservative victory to celebrate.

—Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

DWIGHT MACDONALD, one of our few perceptive political critics in that bleakest of decades, the 1940's, wrote of the Henry Wallace campaign of 1948: "Populism today is a shell which can be filled with any content, even Stalinism, and hence offers its prophet no guide to behavior. Compare Bryan's and Wallace's audiences. Bryan's favorite platform was the Chautauqua lecture: when he was secretary of state, he was criticized for continuing to appear on the Chautauqua circuit along with Swiss bell ringers and 'Sears, the Taffy Man.' The Chautauqua audience was composed of religious-minded, agrarian provincials who hated 'Wall Street' and detested the sophisticated, irreligious culture of the eastern seaboard. But Wallace's audience is drawn from liberals who are well-off and sophisticated. For them, populism is, culturally, a phony way of making a connection with the inarticulate masses (like Josh White's songs)."

Twenty-five years later, Macdonald added a musical footnote to his essay; he championed Country Joe McDonald over the "folkery-fakery" of Pete Seeger. Mr. Seeger is still with us, and ersatz Henry Wallace populism is back with a vengeance. Its latest standard-bearer is another son of Iowa, Senator Tom Harkin—or "Tom William Jennings Harkin," as the *New Republic* calls him. (This is supposed to be an insult.) Anyway, Harkin is pure counterfeit: a statist liberal, awash in PAC money, whose wife is a rich lawyer at Akin, Gump—one of Washington's high-octane firms. Harkin is abrasive and cruel, unlike the daffy idealist Wallace, a decent fool whom Westbrook Pegler dubbed "Old Bubblehead."

Like Bryan populism, rock and roll rings truest in the accents of the South or small-town Midwest. Yet rock critics, like pundits, are usually of affluent Eastern backgrounds; they prefer the mannered, the self-conscious, the safe. When confronted with the genuine article—George Wallace, Huey Long, Axl Rose—they flee to the illusory high ground of moral indignation.

Axl Rose, in case you don't know, is an insolent brat from Lafayette, Indiana, who sings for the most popular hard rock band in America, Guns 'N' Roses. He acts like any Main Street video arcade loudmouth, meaning he brags about his sexual exploits, calls homosexuals "faggots," and tells foreigners to "go back to Iran." Axl's a typical rowdy white-trash kid—smoking and drinking and not taking his SATs like a good Jason or Jennifer —yet the New York City-based press has demonized him as the smack-shooting reincarnation of Joe McCarthy. That he is the most pilloried figure in rock and roll—and, among working- and middle-class kids, the most adulated—suggests the enormous gulf between those who live in America and those who run it.

There's no chance of hearing Guns

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'N' Roses at a Tom Harkin rally, but the musical tastes of faux populists have certainly improved since the Wallace campaign of 1948. Harkin's presidential campaign theme song is Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA," in which a jobless, womanless Vietnam vet finds himself with "nowhere to run, I got nowhere to go." Senator Harkin, happily, can run to a partnership with Akin, Gump should the voters desert him.

Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey, whilom companion of the flighty actress Debra Winger, stumps to the accompaniment of Springsteen's "Born to Run." Great song, bad choice: "Baby this town rips the bones from your back / It's a death trap, it's a suicide rap / We gotta get out while we're young / 'Cause tramps like us, baby we were born to run." The Senator, one gathers, has outgrown Omaha.

No one tried harder, or with less success, to co-opt Middle American rockers than President Reagan's handlers. In his 1984 campaign, Reagan's flunkies implored John Mellencamp to loan them use of "Pink Houses," a bitter, sardonic song by a man who has a healthy contempt for upward mobility. The irony was delicious: Ronald Reagan, paladin of modern conservatism, had spoken of the "sleepy old towns where generation after generation lived. And then the kids in the Midwest left; there was nothing in those towns — Lord, that's why I left!" John Mellencamp, by contrast, still lives in his hometown of Seymour, Indiana. You tell me who the conservative is.

In its dying weeks, the Dukakis campaign revved up its rallies with Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Fortunate Son," a wonderfully resentful song. ("Some folks are born silver spoon in hand / Lord don't they help themselves? / But when the taxman comes to the door / The house looks like a rummage sale / It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no millionaire's son / It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no fortunate one.") The fact that Dukakis, his parents, and his running mate were all millionaires vitiated the tune's effect somewhat.

Plenty of anthemic rock songs await a truly populist movement: Mellencamp's "Small Town," Springsteen's "My Hometown," Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama," the Rainmakers' "Downstream," Neil Young's "Keep on Rockin' in the Free World," and, best of all, the Iron City Houserockers' "Don't Let Them Push You Around."

Of course an authentic populist would be an American Firster who took on Wall Street, the military-industrial complex, newspaper chains, and the New York City-Washington-Los Angeles power axis on behalf of the Seymour, Indianas, of this land. A Bryan for the 90's would be closer to John Mellencamp than to Tom Harkin. Alas, no Democrat in the current lineup fits that bill. Tracy Chapman, the Tufts graduate who is my generation's folky-fakey Pete Seeger, could — and probably will — sing for the lot of 'em.

— Bill Kauffman

WASHINGTON public-relations and lobbying firms have begun to accept clients and staff from either party and from any point on the political spectrum, overcoming their former one-party only tradition. The newest example of this trend is the firm of Powell and Tate, the first half being Jody Powell, former press secretary to then-President Jimmy Carter, and the latter being Sheila Tate, who at one time held the same position for President Bush. This is only the most blatant example; all over the Beltway, the firms that help lower the level of political debate of our nation to the level of beer commercials are now sloughing off their old loyalties and accepting business from all comers.

There are two reasons given for this new trend. The more important reason is simple old-fashioned political greed: the public-relations firms want contacts in both parties. Ed Rollins, a former GOP bigwig who has been hired by the formerly solidly Democratic firm of Sawyer-Miller, puts it this way: "To succeed in this business you have to have ties to both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue." Rollins did not need to elaborate on the meaning of success in this business, but it is all too clear that by it he means something quite different from success as defined by the average American voter, who still assumes that a successful politician is one who helps his country.

The other rationale provided by these firms for their new policy is to better aid their clients' attempt to pass whatever bit of legislation has caught their fancy. "Legislation these days is neither purely Republican nor Democratic," Rollins explains. Instead, "it reflects a combination of interests." The nature of the legislation to be passed does not seem to enter the picture, nor does anyone seem to consider that the only interests being furthered in this arrangement are those of the public-relations firms themselves, and the hordes of lobbyists who create the "interests" that their clients pursue.

Indeed, to hear the lobbyists tell it, "public relations" seems a misnomer, for the public, except at election time, hardly matters at all. These firms are too expensive for the politicians to use them for the mere purpose of influencing the common voter. No, they employ their services for a different purpose: to influence other politicians. The present officeholders no longer have enough confidence in their beliefs (such as they are) to feel that they alone could influence others of their number. In place of the great statesmen of the past who once graced the halls of Congress, there are now only lobbyists, whose screeching and cackling resound in the chamber where once Webster and Clay spoke. Rather than intelligent discourse, we now are greeted with the picture of a congressman with a lobbyist at each ear; whoever can echo the loudest in the cavern before him dictates the vote.

Albert Jay Nock once described an election as a situation wherein one party was in office and wanted to stay in, and the other was out and wished to be in. In American politics today, the difference between the parties is negligible, for in our increasingly "unpartisan" political atmosphere, the same entities are running both sides of the debate; the only loser is the electorate.

— Jerry Russello

CONGRESS has cleared the way for women to fly in combat missions, and there can be little doubt that approval for the use of women in ground combat is not long in coming. If there are many who are disturbed by this aspect of the New World Order, they are remaining quiet. Apparently, most

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Americans have learned what the media call one of the "major lessons of the Gulf War": that women can perform in the military every bit as well as men.

The problem with restricting women from combat, we are told, is that it unfairly hinders their ability to ascend the military career ladder. Concerns for national defense, the needs of young children, or the protection of feminine virtues are of no great matter compared to careerism. An exchange reported in a recent issue of *Newsweek* between Major Kathleen Shields, a 17-year Army reservist in the 70th Division, and Representative Patricia Schroeder, a cosponsor of the House plan to remove women's barriers to combat, illustrates this nicely. Major Shields is quoted as saying, "Tell Pat Schroeder to get out of my boots. She's never been in the service and doesn't know what she's talking about," to which Representative Schroeder responded, "I'm not getting in her boots and I don't intend to. I'm ensuring her equality and removing barriers to her opportunity." It is clear that Representative Schroeder has a tin ear: can't she hear that Major Shields appreciates the barriers to her opportunity, and thinks there are damn good reasons for those barriers to remain?

But, it will be pointed out, there are many women who are not like Major Shields, who do not appreciate but resent these barriers. And so we have Representative Schroeder, one of the most shrill proponents of the notion that the 1980's and Reaganism were marked by greed and avarice and concern for career over all else, defending the rights of women in the military to put their concern for career over all else.

Clearly, something has changed over the past decade. One of the arguments that killed the passage of the ERA was based on the premise that the amendment would overturn the barriers that keep women out of combat. Now those barriers are being removed with hardly a shudder of trepidation. What else has been lost over the past decade? Perhaps this: when in 1948 the Israelis experimented by placing women in direct combat, the main reason the experiment was considered a failure was that the men were demoralized by seeing women killed in combat; the men began placing themselves at higher risk in an attempt to prevent further female casualties. Now, would men still react this way? Perhaps so; perhaps that is not yet lost. But what *is* lost is the notion that such gallantry is admirable. A male soldier who expressed more concern for protecting women than for protecting men would be sent to sensitivity training to ensure that the blowing to bits of a woman would not bother him any more than the death of a man, that the thought of a motherless child would not be any more disturbing to him than the thought of a fatherless son.

And what of the effect placing women in combat would have on national defense? I have little to say about that, and the reason for this is simple: I doubt that a nation that can so blithely discuss sending women to die for their country is a nation that is any longer worth defending.

—*Michael Kelly*

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THE GREEK ORTHODOX Archdiocese, with a membership of some two million under the leadership of Archbishop Iakovos, suspended its relations last June with the National Council of Churches. This came as welcomed tidings to all who are serious about authentic belief in Christ. In an explanatory letter to the NCC bosses, the Primate of North and South America cited the "extreme liberties" taken by the NCC, "which identifies itself with the most liberal Protestant denominations," making "our association and membership impossible." At the same time the Archdiocese broke off ecumenical talks with Episcopalian and Anglican theologians. Among the horrors impelling this latter move were, according to Archdiocese ecumenical officer Father Milton Efthimiou, recent Episcopalian ordinations of a female "bishop" and female "priests," including a lesbian, and more blasphemies from Episcopalian Bishop John Spong of New Jersey, who in his latest book identifies St. Paul as a closet homosexual.

Some people never saw why the Greek, Syrian, Serbian, and other big Orthodox jurisdictions in the United States (including the Orthodox Church in America, a predominantly Russian communion that appeals heavily to American converts) ever saw fit in the first place to affiliate with the NCC and WCC (the World Council of Churches), whose objective has been to stir Christianity into an ecumenical stew with such ingredients as Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, and (of late) even animism and the chic New Age necromancy. That is, these ecumenical gangs have been stirring this cauldron when not busy campaigning with the militant "gays," radical feminists, and the abortion caterers at Planned Parenthood International; when not promoting the gnostic variety of environmentalism and other statist domestic activities; when not trashing Columbus' discovery of America as an "invasion"; and, at least until the ongoing collapse of the Soviet empire got well under way, when not funneling collection-plate receipts to Soviet-surrogate terrorists, supporting the Soviet-front "peace" movement unilaterally to disarm the Free World, and providing cover for religious persecution behind the Iron Curtain—all of which is massively documented and widely known.

But better late than never, and many are, as I noted, pleased with the archbishop's new wisdom. Just don't imagine (not yet anyhow) that you are witnessing some Orthodox version of the Counter Reformation. NCC membership has, after all, become an embarrassment in recent years, as millions of adherents have left the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, and other "mainline"

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denominations, many of them scandalized over anti-Christian NCC activities bankrolled by their donations. The archbishop, who has a name for practicality and who would not at all like to see a similar hemorrhaging of his (relatively) conservative communicants, has, to put it crudely, acted to protect his turf. This, no doubt, was part of his motivation, and was certainly good reason for his actions. Nevertheless, there are central tenets of the faith that render Orthodox participation in the so-called ecumenical movement objectionable to begin with: canons explicitly requiring the Orthodox, particularly their hierarchs, to avoid the kind of joint worship with the non-Orthodox that perforce occurs at NCC gatherings, lest the Faith be compromised.

But note that Archbishop Iakovos' move to *suspend* (rather than resign from) NCC membership, pending an autumn meeting (not yet convened as of this writing) of the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops, to date amounts to no more than a protest and threat. Members of the Standing Conference (it consists of the prominent Orthodox national jurisdictions in the Western Hemisphere) theoretically stand on an equal footing. But the all-too-human fact is that the Standing Conference's two biggest constituencies, the Greek Archdiocese and the Orthodox Church in America, have long vied informally for informal Orthodox hegemony in America. And considering that the Reverend Leonid Kishkovsky of the OCA currently serves as the president of the NCC, some feel that the archbishop's moves were, among other things, an effort to put the OCA's leadership of the NCC in a disreputable light.

Lending weight to this reading was a meeting in Cairo, Egypt, this past May, at which the Greek Archdiocese announced its determination to remain active in the WCC. This was in apparent reaction to threats made by other Orthodox jurisdictions, at the WCC's February 1991 powwow in Canberra, Australia, to resign from the world body owing to the WCC's insistence on whoring after strange gods. (The WCC bosses at Canberra, for instance, allowed a Korean female "theologian" to summon up the spirits of her ancestors in a homemade ritual confabulated from parts of Buddhism, Christianity, animism, and radical feminism.) Since the positions and activities of the WCC and NCC display no qualitative differences, it is hard to discern (theo)logicality in the archbishop's reaffirmation of membership in the one and his suspension of membership in the other a few weeks later.

But God works in strange ways, and, even though some Byzantine maneuvering appears operative here, the move by the American Greeks (and indeed the restiveness of the other Orthodox) is certainly encouraging. Even if he accepts whatever sops are offered him and resumes full NCC membership, Archbishop Iakovos has at the least further exposed the NCC's determinedly anti-Christian thrust. And if he eventually goes to the point of resigning from the ecumenical body, perhaps taking other Orthodox groups with him, the loss of prestige attending the defection of the ancient Orthodox jurisdictions would only clarify NCC—and WCC—status as a failed movement bent on engineering a lowest-common-denominator world religion in which anything and everything is tolerable and permissible.

—*James Graves*

CLYDE WILSON—a contributing editor of *Chronicles*, a professor of history at the University of South Carolina, and editor of *The Papers of John C. Calhoun*—will be the guest of honor at the USC Graduate History Association's spring symposium, to be held at the university on March 26-28. The symposium will both honor Professor Wilson and celebrate the publication of volume 20 of the Calhoun papers. Guest speakers will include Eugene Genovese, M.E. Bradford, Lacy K. Ford, Carol Bleser, and John Shelton Reed. Our congratulations go out to Professor Wilson on this much-deserved honor.

GREAT TOPICS, GREAT ISSUES

Cultural Amnesia - September 1991 - Jacob Neusner on the loss of knowledge and its consequences, George Watson on the role of the literal man, Anthony Harrigan on the importance of dreams and reveries, and Theodore Pappas on the meaning of the New World Order. Plus Frank Brownlow on Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education*, Jack D. Douglas on the sex studies of Alfred Kinsey, and Lorrin Anderson on the politics of television docudrama.

Western Writing - November 1991 - Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the work of Laura Ingalls Wilder, A. Carl Bredahl on why Western narrative is so American, Stephen Bodio on the life and literature of ranchwomen, and a short story by Kent Nelson. Plus M.E. Bradford on the *Western Writers Series*, Thomas Fleming on traveling in Italy, and John Shelton Reed on the environment and the role of the federal government.

Life on a Small Planet - October 1991 - Garrett Hardin on why good fences make good neighbors, Jacqueline Kasun on population control and the environment, and Richard D. Lamm on the role of culture in determining national success. Plus Chilton Williamson, Jr. on the politics of writing histories of Columbus, Thomas Molnar on capitalism and Eastern Europe, and Florence King on Jonathan Agronsky's *Marion Barry*.

America First: 1941/1991 - December 1991- Four views of the America First Committee: by Justus D. Doenecke, Wayne S. Cole, Ruth Sarles Benedict, and Leonard P. Liggio. Plus E. Christian Kopff on the Veterans of Future Wars, Thomas Fleming on the lessons of 1941, Samuel Francis on the need for a new America First policy, Theodore Pappas on the Tyler Kent affair, and John B. Thompson on the art of indoctrination.

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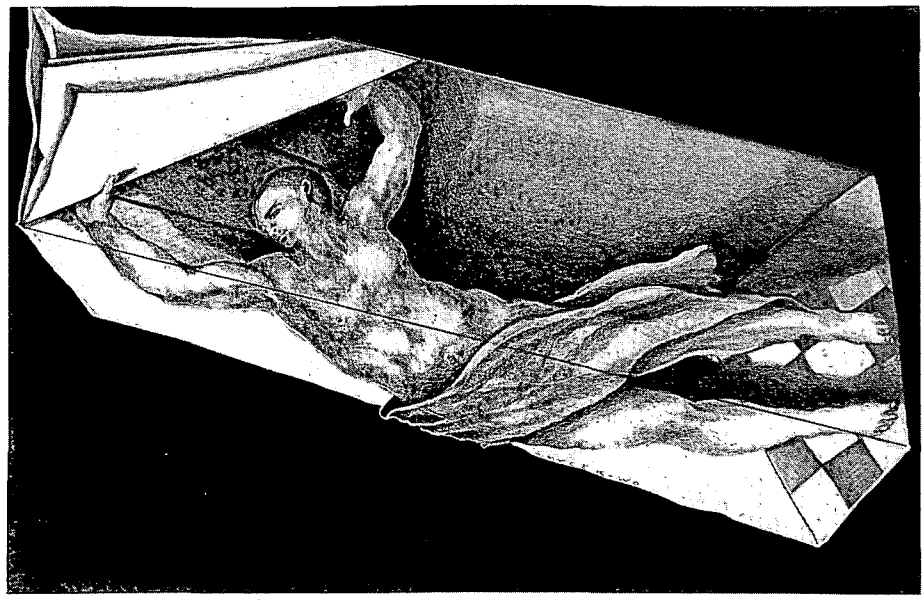

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Flies Trapped in Honey

by Thomas Fleming

Nineteen ninety-one was the year of revolutions, the greatest, perhaps, since 1848. Many who observed the events from safe seats on this side of the Atlantic must have recalled Churchill's great Fulton speech, in which he described the "Iron Curtain" that had "descended across the continent," cutting off "all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe," from Berlin to Belgrade. That curtain was lifted, not slowly and ponderously, but—from the perspective that even a year affords—almost all at once.

What is really going on, almost no one in the United States can know, so ignorant are we of the languages and histories of all of Europe, particularly the East. Even before the statues had toppled and the names of cities had changed, swarms of patent-medicine salesmen were arriving on every flight from America; social democrats from Harvard, urging the Russians to follow the example of Sweden at the very moment that the Swedes were realizing what a botch they had made of their country. The social democrats, however, had been beaten to the punch by professional free-enterprisers eager to sell ex-communists on the merits of state capitalism. What a competition: career bureaucrats and lapdog academics, slickers who had never earned an honest dollar in their lives, direct-mail con artists who had been living off what they could siphon from the pensions of retired Army officers and patriotic widows. The socialists and capitalists alike are spending their hard-earned alms on "fact-finding" tours of the Soviet Union or playing missionaries to the victims of communism. One friend of ours happened to travel in the wake of one of these tours and met with a group of Russian leaders who commented on the famous apostle of democratic capitalism they had just met. "Over here we know the type well: they all work for the KGB."

With all the disinterested goodwill in the world, it is hard for Americans to understand what is going on in so apparently familiar a country as Germany. After reading reports, month after month, of rising anti-immigrant resentment all over Germany, the *New York Times* reluctantly did a story at the end of September. Thoughtful observers were predicting trouble several months earlier.

The same source has also reported another problem among the former East Germans: debt. As we described some time ago, the East Germans—reportedly fleeing from religious and political oppression—did not flock to the churches, universities, and newspaper offices of the West. They headed straight for the discount stores where they loaded up on stereo systems, VCRs, and big-screen TV sets, all bought on time. A year later, many of them are out of work and most of them are singing the first verse of a familiar American song, the overextended credit blues.

From news reports and conversations, I have picked up a few fragments of information that can be used to suggest the overall design of the puzzle I am trying to piece together: the first item on the agenda of the new Romanian government was, apparently, liberalizing abortion; Big Macs, jeans, rock music, and pornography are the products in greatest demand all over the former dominions of the Soviet empire; finally, it is pulp fiction a la Sidney Sheldon and Stephen King, and not the censored works of Solzhenitsyn, that are selling everywhere on the free market of the street. The repressed peoples of the East are not lusting after the

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Common Law or a free press; neither individual dignity nor the principle of habeas corpus are the specters haunting Europe, but greed and self-indulgence. It is our vices — our depravities and addictions — that we are exporting, not the virtues of our way of life.

This is in fact the triumph of what we call democracy over what they called communism, though neither term has the slightest thing to do with the actual social and political systems of America and the Soviet Union. Their system was doomed to fail from the start, because it demanded sacrifices too great for mortal flesh to bear. Ideally, Marxist communism is a system of equality in which all distinctions of sex, wealth, class, and ethnicity disappear. People work in common for the common good and rear their children in common to enable their wives (if there really would be wives and not simply women) to serve the state to their highest productive capacity.

This is, as I have written in a 1988 book, politics against the grain of human nature. Even in the short run of a single generation, it could not succeed. Tell people they cannot work for themselves and set aside something for their children, and they will either find ways to cheat or else they will quit working altogether. The market was not something invented by Adam Smith; it is the automatic and inevitable tool devised by human nature to satisfy natural needs. All the jackboots, propaganda, and concentration camps in the world will never succeed in creating a New Soviet Man, except temporarily among a few teenage idealists. The rest of us are too lazy and too selfish to live in Utopia. At best, we might make weekend visits and return with glowing reports on universal literacy and constitutions outlawing the death penalty. "Human, all too human" Nietzsche found even the best (or worst) of us, for which we may thank the God who made us.

Overt repression breeds dissent, but a religion that thrives on persecution may fall into decay as an establishment. (Consider only the case of the Church of England.) Lenin, Stalin, and Brezhnev controlled the press, attacked the churches, and outlawed rival political parties. The result was *samizdat* publication, clandestine piety, and the monumental work of Solzhenitsyn. During the same period in the United States, the press has been free (or at least up for grabs to the highest bidder), religion unfettered, and political parties of every type (except, for a brief period, revolutionary movements) tolerated, and the result is the narrowest spectrum of opinion that can be observed in any civilized country. The greatest political debates in the United States are the mutual recriminations of left liberals and center liberals over whether or not affirmative action policies really help minorities to achieve equality. A goal that would have been mocked and despised by most political philosophers and virtually every sensible person in Europe and the United States is now held aloft as the highest ideal, unchallenged by dissent. Since the 1930's, there have been no American dissidents to criticize the fundamental assumptions of the regime.. There is no American equivalent of *From Under the Rubble*. Why? Is it because our system is so perfect that it is immune to criticism or because our culture is so servile that no one with anything to risk has the courage to go into opposition?

Soviet communism had its Marx and Lenin, but for American social democracy there is no one ideologue, no one revolutionary who midwifed and gave birth to the system. The political leaders responsible were many, but Wilson, Hoover, and the Roosevelts are the most important. As for the ideologues, their name is legion, from Locke to Rawls, but it is the Lockean tradition culminating in the prosaic figure of John Dewey that has slowly and inexorably created the ideological regime that has stolen the name "democracy."

The features of that regime are so familiar that, like a man who unexpectedly catches sight of himself in a mirror, we are almost incapable of recognizing them. I can only list a few of them: first and foremost, the elevation of the state to a pagan divinity. Are there wrongs in the world — a man beating his wife, an employer insulting his hireling — then the state will redress them. Most of the alleged wrongs have something to do with inequality, of wealth, status, power, intelligence, opportunities, or even good looks. "Facism" may soon replace racism as the heresy of fashion, and ugly men will soon be demanding the right to plastic surgery and affirmative action in their pursuit of beautiful women.

There is no need to go on. We live this absurd comedy every day and can no longer laugh at Ionesco or shudder at Orwell. Modern society has already overtaken and surpassed their most bitter fantasies. The real question is why there is so little serious opposition, even from the right, particularly from the right.

The answer, in a nutshell, is that John Dewey, who couldn't write a decent English sentence and whose knowledge of history and literature was a string of platitudes, was right on a fundamental point that escaped the brilliant and learned Marx. This vital point is expressed in the old proverb: you can catch more flies with honey than with gall (or vinegar).

To understand the essence of Deweyism — and most Deweyites either haven't read him or think they disagree with him — it is necessary to strip away all his blather about participatory democracy, aesthetics, etc. He knew very little about most of the subjects he pontificated on, and he wouldn't have known a town meeting from a department meeting; in fact, his arrogance and despotism forced him out of the University of Chicago. But for all his ignorance and naiveté — he apparently thought Trotsky really was innocent of the charges against him — Dewey and his followers have been convinced that it is the honeyed persuasion of propaganda that will change society, not official coercion. The ideal vehicles for this indoctrination process were, they realized, the public schools.

A Puritan Vermonter, Dewey lost his religious faith and ceased to attend the Congregational Church some time in his 30's. He was, nonetheless, a deeply religious man who regarded himself as the prophet of the faith that would replace Christianity, that is democracy. Like the fabled Jesuits of every Protestant's nightmare, Dewey knew it was important to start early. Children had to be weaned away from their parents' particularities, their superstitions and prejudices, if a new and better human society was to be created.

Every political theory is a theory of human nature in disguise, and Dewey, while conceding the existence of

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natural instincts, put himself solidly behind the views of Locke and Helvetius: human beings enter the world as malleable clay that is molded by custom and circumstance. Unlike Helvetius, Dewey realized that nature and custom were formidable obstacles. To overcome them would require a wholesale reformation of social institutions. This would be difficult, he argued, but far from impossible.

Dewey's argument boils down to this: if men are allowed to gratify their instincts on mere consumption and enjoyment, they will gladly accept state ownership or, at least, control of land, resources, and goods.

Take the case of property. Unlike the Bolsheviks who simply confiscated the land, shot the farmers who resisted, and starved the rest, Dewey recognized an instinct for possession. But since "consumption is the normal end of possession," he conceived of "a state of things in which the property impulse will get full satisfaction by holding goods as mine in just the degree in which they were visibly administered for a benefit in which a corporate community shared." Translated into English, Dewey's argument boils down to this: if men are allowed to gratify their instincts on mere consumption and enjoyment, they will gladly accept state ownership or, at least, control of land, resources, and goods. Let people enjoy their condo or apartment and they will not wonder about who really owns it: the bank that gave the mortgage or the government that stands behind the bank and is able to confiscate the property to build a highway or a baseball stadium for the "corporate community."

Property is only the smallest part of the picture, and Dewey himself never understood more than a fraction of what he and his co-revolutionaries were planning. Like most men who deny human nature, they worked by instinct, dimly understanding that the road to a man's heart is through his stomach—and his glands.

Imagine the sort of primitive state of nature in which the human species slowly formed its character. Like other animals, the primary needs are related to survival and procreation, and he who lives to have the most children, succeeds in passing on his particular qualities to successive generations. "Men wanted," the sign on every woman's cave would read, "Self-sacrificing saints, sexless nerds, pacifists, and milktoasts need not apply."

Winners in the competition for food and sex would have to have certain qualities. Intelligence, of course, good health and strength, but since men are rarely rational about the things that count toward their survival, they must rely on instincts. The *libido dominandi* is an essential trait, because it drives one man to seek dominion over another and ensures the winner greater access to what he wants. And what is it he wants? Food, for one thing, especially good red meat with lots of protein and fats. In the wild, you can't get enough of it, and it takes the prick of a particular hunger to send a man off hunting game, when he might just as well dig up the tubers under his feet. Sweets and salt are also in short supply, and every human animal grows up craving steak and potato chips and candy.

With his belly full, the young savage's fancy turns to thoughts of love, although it is certainly "love not taken lightly." The winners in the genetic competition will not have been ethereal young men who liked to talk art and politics in what they imagine to be British accents. ("Men wanted: Manhattan conservatives need not apply.") An acute sensibility to feminine charm has always been a defining quality of the good man, even the good man who has been taught to confine his attentions to the mother of his children.

Of course, it is one thing to want women, another to get them, and even the most savage suitors had to face prospective fathers-in-law who were looking for the same kind of qualities that fathers-in-law always look for: they want a man who can provide for their little girl—and ensure the success of their own qualities in the great genetic lottery that produced human nature. A typical American teenager who divided his time between pigging out and making lewd remarks may be straight on the basics, but he would not have impressed daddy Magog.

Men still, even in this century of democracy and progress, come into this world as paleolithic savages, with the same appetites and inclinations as the sons of that African Eve who is supposed to be "our general mother." Try to suppress them, and our appetites will only find more devious channels and outlets toward their gratification. You cannot alter or suppress human nature, you can only warp its expression. The great success of American democracy is its ability to satisfy the most basic instincts of the human race, while at the same time virtually eliminating its highest qualities. We are the fly caught in honey that has hardened into amber.

Meals used to require the effort and talent of a hardworking woman. Who needs a balanced diet or even good-tasting food, when he can slop up Big Macs, salted and sugared french fries still dripping in grease, and wash them down with soft drinks invented to kill off diabetics? Oh, the good times when "A woman who could still cook, still would" may not be over, as Merle Haggard fears, for good, and there are still a few people who practice what they call "gourmet" cooking, but we are a long way from the childhood of Ezra Pound, who never put bad food in his mouth until he went to college.

For most men, sexual gratification used to mean marriage, a commitment to one (or at most two or three) women and the offspring they bore—for it was this commitment that daddy Magog stipulated as the price of his daughter. In a state of nature, Don Juan would either have to make himself chief or be killed by the first father or husband whose female property he damaged. But now, a young man of any quality can be assured of a steady supply of willing girls. Today, boys of twelve and thirteen years are besieged on the telephone by a dazzling assortment of Kimberleys, Heathers, and Taras. (I speak now as a father.) The situation hardly changes when they marry. Women have now sunk to the low, predatory level of men, and with both parties in a race to rack up the most extramarital points,

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the high divorce rate in the Western nations is hardly surprising.

Of course, there is the loser, who "can't get no girly action." This is the "kind of man who reads *Playboy*" and checks out the X-rated films from the Family Video Store. To be fair, even some of the Don Juans are addicted to pornography. It helps to keep their interest up, even when the charms of Morgan or Tiffany grow stale. There is nothing unusual or unnatural in this. In the beginning, any successful male had to be constantly on the alert for the glimpse or scent of the attractive female who would make him "immortal with a kiss." But pornography is the Big Mac of sex: it titillates and teases; it may even seem to satisfy for the moment. But the more you get, the sicker you become, and eventually you forget what real food or real women (with real names) are like.

This is the triumph of American democracy, to have created a line of succubi that haunt our waking dreams until we have lost our appetite for reality. Television, radio, movies, and electronic music might all be used, to a limited extent, for some good purpose, and I am not immune to their pleasures, even their vicious pleasures. But we don't limit them. We never turn the damn things off. Now, the latest advertising gimmick is to put giant TV screens into health clubs and airports, alternating the soft-sell "entertainment" segments with hard-sell commercials. Ted Turner has even seduced schools into accepting his broadcasts, and the only complaints come typically from anticapitalist leftists. Poor Ezra Pound, stuck in his cage outside of Pisa, wrote some of the best verse of his later career, but transferred to the warm and dry St. Elizabeth's loony bin, he turned out virtually nothing worth reading. Perhaps it had something to do with the television blasting outside his room.

Succubi, nightmares, simulacra. Even the lady of Shalott was "half sick of shadows." We delight in them and would not trade them in for reality, even if we could. The schools, as Dewey knew, made sure of that. By teaching nothing of grammar, literature, history, or theology, American schools —public, private, and parochial—see to it that we grow up knowing nothing of the world. Instead, we are trapped within a towering prison of images and abstractions, and a man might spend his life butting with his head and never crack through the deadening wall of lies. We are like the villains of old, so hardened in our ways that we cannot recognize virtue or beauty when we see it. I think of the remarkable portrait of the "Innominato," the unnamed robber baron of Manzoni's masterpiece, *I Promessi Sposi*, but even his conscience was stirred at the sight of the helpless Lucia. Today, a girl might be assaulted and murdered beneath our noses, and which of us would interfere? So well have we learned our lessons.

Of all the 20th-century prophets who predicted doom for our botched civilization, it was Aldous Huxley, who saw most clearly. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* George Orwell looked at the surface symptoms of political repression and official propaganda that characterized Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, and extrapolated. The Soviets played Orwell's game for seventy years, and it didn't work. Huxley, on the other hand, looked closer to home in Britain and America and saw the future in California—a deracinated culture based on hedonism, mood elevators, and compulsory consumption of useless articles that keep the world economy going. The control exerted by Huxley's world-state over its people extends from genetically engineered babies raised in government nurseries and schooled in classes on "elementary sex and elementary class consciousness" to a lifetime of assigned duties, obligatory pleasures, ending in euthanasia for the public good. It is a happy-talking New World Order, where the greatest enemy of the regime would be a Shakespeare-reading savage, capable of love and hate.

The totalitarian states of the 30's and 40's were, as Huxley realized, too crude and negative in their methods: "The most important Manhattan projects of the future will be vast government-sponsored enquiries into what the politicians and the participating scientists will call 'the problem of happiness'—in other words, the problem of making people love their servitude."

Huxley published *Brave New World* in 1932 and set the tale six centuries into the future. In 1946, in the foreword to a new edition, he revised his timetable: "Today it seems quite possible that the horrors may be upon us within a single century." There were only two likely alternatives, he suggested, either "a number of national, militarized totalitarianisms" threatening to blow up the world or else "one supra-national totalitarianism, called into existence by the social chaos resulting from rapid technological progress . . . and developing under the need for efficiency and stability, into the welfare-tyranny of Utopia." Forty-five years later, we know it is the latter scenario that will be played out, perhaps by the first years of the next millennium. In a similar vein, Pound told his mother, "the art of letters will come to an end before A.D. 2000." If Pound and Huxley were both correct, as I believe they were, then we can take comfort in this reflection: come the millennium, there will be few people around capable of reading *Brave New World* or any other book produced by the lost civilization. ◈

Pets

by John Nixon, Jr.

The love they could not give to one another
They ultimately forced on quadrupeds—
Poor captive creatures, longing for the wild
But getting love and table scraps. In time,
The dog became a charming thespian.
If tail-wagging and licking hands did not
Denote affection, then what could? Just listen
To that adoring bark. Pure joy. But no
Amount of condescending milk poured out
In fractured saucers could persuade the cat
To view the thing as more than what it was:
Suave slavery. *You cannot love your own,*
The velvet gait declares. *I'll not love you.*

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Prophet Sustained

James Burnham and the Managerial Revolution

by Samuel Francis

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

When *National Review* published a special obituary issue on James Burnham soon after his death in 1987, perhaps the most remarkable contribution came from the pen of John Kenneth Galbraith. The Harvard economist reminisced about the eager welcome with which he and fellow New Dealers in the Roosevelt administration had received Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution: What is Happening in the World* when the book was first published in 1941. "Here in lucid detail," wrote Professor Galbraith,

> was the full exploration—economic, social, political—of the case Berle and Means had made. Here was the world that Marx's imperative of capitalist concentration had foretold. But here, beyond Marx, was the world in which the capitalist, in turn, had been relegated to a bystander role. The dividends still came; the power had gone. . . .
>
> *The Managerial Revolution* was widely read and discussed. . . . I was persuaded of its importance by Washington colleagues in 1941 amidst all the pressures of wartime price control, for which I had just assumed responsibility.

Professor Galbraith's recollections are remarkable because it was the central prophecy of *The Managerial Revolution* that the New Deal was the womb where an embryonic totalitarian order was being hatched, an order of the same nature as similar New Deals in Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. If indeed the apostle of postwar American liberalism and his colleagues in the Roosevelt administration welcomed that prophecy, then he perhaps let slip a secret of state that was never intended for the ears of the vulgar.

For most of the 50 years since the publication of *The Managerial Revolution*, the architects and high priests of the managerial state have made it their business to deny, ignore, or curse the prophecy. C. Wright Mills and Hans H. Gerth savagely reviewed the book when it was published, though much of what Mills himself later wrote in *The Power Elite* resembled some of Burnham's formulations, and it received all the wrath of Bolshevism scorned from the apparatchiks of both the Trotskyist and Stalinist wings of the movement. Various writers have often insinuated or even openly stated that Burnham plagiarized his ideas from an obscure left-wing nut named Bruno Rizzi, though the accusation has now been definitively disproved. Throughout the copious literature on the American corporate economy, Burnham's name is still invoked, but usually with disclaimers of distance, distaste, and embarrassment.

Certainly there was much to criticize in Burnham's formulation of the theory of the managerial revolution. The book, in its origins, grew out of a protracted polemical conflict among the Trotskyists, with whom Burnham had been joined from 1934 to 1940, and Marxist ideology, especially a crude economic determinism, still colored much of his thought. Moreover, Burnham made the error of assuming that certain contemporary political trends of the 1940's—German military successes in the early part of World War II and the creation of various agencies in the

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New Deal—were permanent, and when the Germans lost the war and several New Deal agencies were abolished after Roosevelt's death, Burnham's critics seized upon these developments to argue that his prophecies and analysis had been discredited. Finally, Burnham wrote in an aggressive, not to say brutal, style that was often too dismissive of critics and alternative social theories, and he expressed his own thesis in schematic and sometimes poorly defined language. To a large extent, these flaws also derived from several years of immersion in Marxist polemics, the literature of which is permeated by the same vices.

Nevertheless, for all its errors, *The Managerial Revolution* uncovered what is one of the central truths of the 20th century and elaborated it into an interpretation of the present age, and despite the criticisms leveled at it for the last half century, it has exerted a profound influence on subsequent social and political thought. Not only do the works of Galbraith, Mills, Daniel Bell, Robert Nisbet, and Peter Drucker owe a large debt to Burnham, but also Karl Wittfogel wrote in *Oriental Despotism* that "social science is indebted to James Burnham for pointing to the power potential inherent in managerial control" and expressed his own "appreciation of the contribution made by Burnham through his concept of managerial leadership." Jacques Ellul also acknowledged Burnham's influence on his own thought in *The Technological Society*, and David Riesman in *The Lonely Crowd* could write of "Marx, Mosca, Michels, Pareto, Weber, Veblen, or Burnham," placing him and his work in the same category as the major social thinkers of the last hundred years. It is now well established that George Orwell, who wrote two long essays on Burnham in the 1940's, based *Nineteen Eighty-Four* on the prophecies of *The Managerial Revolution*, and in one form or another Burnham's ideas have been recapitulated by dozens of writers, thinkers, and scholars in several different fields.

The theory of the managerial revolution as Burnham formulated it in 1941 holds that Marxism is correct that capitalism, in the sense of privately owned and operated business enterprises seeking profit, is historically in decline. It disagrees with Marxism that what is replacing capitalism and the society capitalism created is a socialist order in which the proletariat will rule. Instead of socialist revolution, Burnham argued that the managers of large corporate firms were beginning to form a new ruling class and that they would merge with similar groups in the modern bureaucratic state. The result would be an order in which the state and the economy would be "fused." Formal nationalization of the means of production might or might not occur, but the reality, apart from the formal and legal arrangements, would be a monolithic concentration of power in the hands of the dominant managerial class in state, union, and corporation.

One of the foundations of this theory was the 1933 work of Adolf A. Berle and Gardiner C. Means entitled *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*. Berle and Means had argued that modern corporate businesses were no longer controlled or operated by their owners (stockholders), partly because the stockholders were too dispersed to exercise direct control and partly because they lacked the necessary technical expertise to direct the corporation intelligently. Those who actually did direct the corporation were the managers, and they gradually assumed *de facto* control from the stockholders by virtue of their superior expertise and through their manipulation of modern corporation law.

Burnham believed that Berle and Means' work confirmed his own theory, though they had discussed "management" only in the formal, legalistic sense of those who sit on the corporate boards of directors. It was Burnham's innovation to extend the concept of "manager" beyond this narrow, legalistic meaning to refer to anyone who possessed technical skills that are applicable to social, economic, and political functions. The "managers" in Burnham's sense thus included "administrators, experts, directing engineers, production executives, propaganda specialists, technocrats," and such managers had little incentive to preserve private property because they held their position not through ownership (as had the old capitalist entrepreneurs or the corporate stockholders) but by virtue of their technical expertise. Hence there was at least a latent conflict of interest between the stockholders (and any other social group with interests in private property) and the managers. The perception of this conflict was not original with Burnham. Berle and Means had also emphasized it, and it was noted by John Maynard Keynes and indeed by both Adam Smith and Karl Marx in discussions of the joint stock companies of early capitalism.

Burnham also argued, again parallel with Marxism, that the displacement of one ruling class based on private property by a new class based on technical skills would have profound social and political implications, and it was precisely those implications that were the most controversial and the most disturbing parts of *The Managerial Revolution*. Capitalist society had developed a limited state, parliamentary government, organization in the form of sovereign nation-states, and a dominant "belief-pattern" of individualism in the economy, art, morality, religion, and social manners. These institutions reflected the interests and beliefs of the dominant capitalist ruling class, which needed a limited government that its representatives could control and found an ethic of individualism useful as a rationale for its own economic interests.

Once the capitalist class had been overthrown, Burnham argued, there would be no further need for these institutions and beliefs. The new managerial class would demand a collectivist economy, an unlimited state, a government controlled by bureaucratic administrators justifying itself through formulas of scientific and rationalistic efficiency rather than government by parliamentarians operating on the basis of legal and constitutionalist codes, a transnational or global organization in place of national sovereignty, and an ethic of collectivism that would emphasize the duty of the individual to conform and subordinate his interests and identity to those of some larger collective category—the party, the race, the people, the class—which in reality was simply an abstraction that disguised the interests of the ruling managerial elite. The phrase "managerial revolution" has survived in economic textbooks mainly to refer to the "separation of ownership and control" that both Burnham and Berle and Means noted, but in Burnham's usage it refers not only to this process by which managers come to

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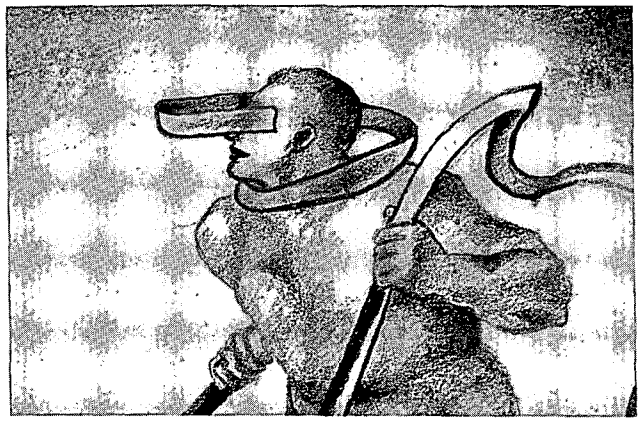
dominate owners and stockholders but also to the whole social, political, and cultural revolution that he predicted would ensue from managerial rule.

Burnham interpreted the events of the 1930's in terms of this theory. Contrary to what Trotsky maintained until his death, Stalinist Russia was not a "workers' state" that was temporarily deformed by Stalin's dictatorship but was a fully developed managerial state in which the logic of the revolution had been carried to its full extent of totalitarianism. Similarly, collectivist organization in Nazi Germany also represented the coming to power of the managerial class of the National Socialist Party in opposition to the old ruling class of Junkers and the incompetent administrators of the Weimar Republic.



In the New Deal, Burnham saw the beginnings of a similar regime in the United States. The New Deal relied on the Caesarist leadership of Roosevelt in much the same way that Russia and Germany relied on that of Stalin and Hitler. It created a large bureaucracy in the federal executive branch, and it sought to override congressional, state, and local authority with the centralized power of the New Deal administrative agencies and to manage the economy through these agencies. It allied with various "progressive" businessmen and managers in modern corporations against smaller and older forms of entrepreneurial capitalism, and it sought to rationalize or justify its power through an appeal to democratist, collectivist ideologies that challenged and rejected the classical liberal formulas of the old entrepreneurial bourgeois class. "The fact of the matter," Burnham asserted,

> is that the New Deal's liberalism and progressivism are *not* liberalism and progressivism in the historical meaning of these terms; not, that is to say, capitalist liberalism and progressivism. Its progressivism, if we wish to call it that, consists of the steps it takes toward managerial society.

Internationally, Burnham saw World War II as "the first great war of managerial society," in which the managerial superpowers would contend for world domination. Managerial elites existed in those areas of the globe in which advanced industry flourished, which Burnham identified as Western Europe, the United States, and Japan, and these states or transnational blocs under their control would be the main contestants in the struggle for the world. The nation-state would no longer be a useful form of collective organization, and "the comparatively large number of sovereign nations under capitalism is being replaced by a comparatively small number of great nations or 'superstates,' which will divide the world among them." Sovereignty will cease to exist or be restricted to the superstates. Burnham's conclusions about the future of the world were thus pessimistic: the managerial states would be totalitarian internally and imperialistic externally, and they would plunge the world into global wars until one or some of them had subdued it. He saw the new managerial class as being driven not by ideas (which it used only for its own convenience) but by the economic logic of the technical skill by which they held power in the mass economic, political, and social organizations they controlled.

If this was the world that the young Mr. Galbraith and his comrades were so eager to construct, Burnham himself made clear that he was not advocating or supporting what he predicted. "I have no personal wish to prove the theory of the managerial revolution true," he wrote. "On the contrary, my personal interests, material as well as moral, and my hopes are in conflict with the conclusions of this theory." In his second book, *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* (1943), Burnham recast the theory, excising the Marxist and economic determinist elements and reformulating the same predictions in a framework drawn from the classical theory of elites of Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca. In a preface to a 1960 reprint of *The Managerial Revolution*, the older Burnham (he had been 36 when the book was originally published in 1941) acknowledged that his original expression of the theory "now seems to me too rigid and doctrinaire. . . . Events have proved some propositions — particularly some of the political as distinguished from the sociological and economic conclusions — wrong or incomplete." He believed the prediction of a struggle for the world among "a small number of great political aggregates, or superstates, has been confirmed," but today, he wrote, "I would allow for a greater range of variation within the general managerial form."

Yet not all of Burnham's later qualifications may be called for. Obviously, there were flaws in Burnham's predictions, but it is impossible to read *The Managerial Revolution* today without a haunting sense of familiarity. Nazi Germany and Japan were defeated, but the United States and the Soviet Union soon emerged as the dominant superstates of the postwar world, and regional and transnational alliances, organizations, and security pacts took over some of the actual functions of traditional nation-states. The New Deal agencies were abolished, but new agencies soon came into being that managed and manipulated the economy and society in much the same way or in even more radical ways, and smaller independent businesses and the social and cultural order associated with entrepreneurial capitalism continued to wither as the bureaucratic, centralized state and the bureaucratized managerial economy continued to coalesce. Congress and states were not abolished, but the "imperial presidency" has flourished almost continuously since Roosevelt's day and has relied on an ever growing number of bureaucrats rather than elected officials as its core. Collectivist formulas have also flourished, and the

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individualist ideas and belief patterns of premanagerial society have been all but forgotten or have been conveniently reinterpreted to suit the new social, political, and economic realities. Regardless of Burnham's errors, then, it ought to be obvious that he was essentially correct in the substance of his prophecies.

It is possible, of course, to argue that Burnham's analysis —his explanation of various historical trends towards bureaucratization, collectivism, globalism, etc., in terms of the interests of an emerging managerial elite—is either wrong or irrelevant to his correct perceptions and predictions of the trends themselves. Acceptance of the connection between his analysis and his predictions depends in part on the degree to which the analysis itself can be empirically substantiated and in part on the extent to which elite theory in general is a persuasive framework for explaining, predicting, and evaluating social reality. Nevertheless, while Burnham was correct to abandon the crude economic determinism of his original formulation, the core of his theory remains a powerfully suggestive conceptual tool for understanding not only what was happening in the world in 1941 but indeed what is happening now. Retaining this core, it is possible to reformulate the theory of the managerial revolution with the necessary modifications to make it a useful framework for interpreting contemporary as well as historical events.

First, there is considerable empirical confirmation of Burnham's view of the bureaucratization of the economy in the work of Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., whose *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1978) is a massive documentation of the elements of the Berle-Means-Burnham thesis with reference to the displacement of entrepreneurial owner-operators and stockholders by professional, technically skilled managers as the dominant leadership stratum in the American corporate economy. Second, Burnham's extension of the concept of "manager" to include not only corporate executives in Berle and Means' legalistic and formalistic sense but also any technically skilled professional operating in large-scale organizations, economic or political (or indeed cultural) offers a unifying concept around which a theory of a managerial elite may be built.

As organizations grow in size, assets, the number of personnel, and the number and complexity of their operations, they cannot be operated or controlled apart from technical skills in the form of scientific, engineering, administrative, economic, or legal expertise. Legal ownership of property or formal occupancy of political office is irrelevant to the acquisition and application of such skills, so that property owners and officeholders per se cannot by virtue of ownership and officeholding exercise the technical skills necessary for the operation of mass organizations. Those who acquire technical skills relevant to organizational activities thus also acquire effective control of the organization. There is no reason, of course, why stockholders or owner-operators, for example, cannot acquire technical skills themselves and thereby perpetuate their own control of the corporations, but, as Burnham predicted and as Chandler shows, the entrepreneurial upper class for the most part simply did not do so. Its members continued to own large amounts of stock and to derive considerable wealth from it, but they did not take part in the actual management of the corporate organization. As Galbraith says, "The dividends still came; the power had gone." And, in the extended sense of manager that Burnham used, a similar displacement of elites took place in the state, where technically skilled professional bureaucrats and staffs rather than the formal officeholders they ostensibly served, actually planned and implemented the functions of the managerial state.

But the separation of ownership and control in the corporation and the separation of formal office and actual control in the state does not mean merely a division of interests between owners and officeholders on the one hand and managers on the other. It is the interest of the managers to preserve and enhance those features of the corporation and state that require technical and managerial skills and therefore to encourage the further enlargement, centralization, and bureaucratization of these institutions. Moreover, insofar as these features come into conflict with the small-scale, localized, and personal framework of traditional institutions and beliefs, it is the common interest of the managerial elites in state and corporation to abolish, diminish, or delegitimize them.

The managerial interests are served by collectivist and social-rationalist ideologies that de-emphasize the individual, the personal, the local, and the particular and champion the collective, the impersonal, and the universal.

Hence, the managerial revolution is not merely the replacement of one set of leaders, the "Ins," by another, the "Outs." It is the basis for an organizational revolution in the size and scale of the economy and the state and for a cultural revolution in the normative belief-patterns of society as well. The traditional political, social, and ethical ideologies that served premanagerial society—individualism, classical liberalism, constitutionalism, states' rights, personal moral responsibility, etc.—will not serve managerial elites. The managerial interests are served by collectivist and social-rationalist ideologies that de-emphasize the individual, the personal, the local, and the particular and champion the collective, the impersonal, and the universal. Since large-scale organizations (what Pitirim Sorokin called "colossalism") must operate in many different subcultural environments and political jurisdictions, they tend to dissolve and homogenize local cultural variations and local political autonomy into a uniform, centralized, and collective mass, and the ideologies they promote reflect this tendency in the form of political and social egalitarianism, democratism, and universalism. The triumph of such managerial ideologies is due not to the decadence of traditional beliefs and those who adhere to them but to the rise of a new social group in the form of a managerial elite that sponsors and promotes them in its own interests.

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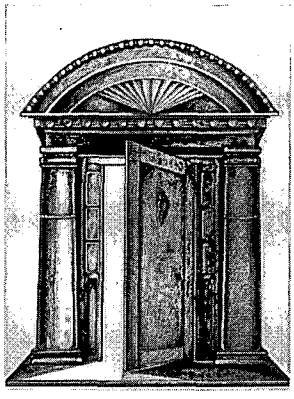
Among the social and political phenomena for which the theory of the managerial revolution offers a unified conceptual explanation is the conflict between left and right in the United States since the New Deal era. Until recently, the mainstream of American conservatism has been closely linked with the defense of premanagerial (mainly bourgeois) institutions and belief-patterns and with resistance to managerial political, economic, and cultural forces, which, as Galbraith understood, have been centered on the political left. The theory implies that the left-right conflict is not merely a conflict of political parties, candidates, and ideologies but also a struggle between a declining (bourgeois) elite and an ascending (managerial) elite over the issue of which one will direct the course of American life. Hence, a political movement of the right that espouses premanagerial goals or seeks to resist managerial agendas cannot expect to achieve these ends simply by promulgating ideas or winning elections within the organizational framework of the managerial regime. It must seek to displace that framework and the elite that controls it.

The theory also offers a sociological morphology for such concepts as Hilaire Belloc's "servile state" and related ideas of 20th-century political and social theory. Most such ideas perceived that the cultural and intellectual disorder of the century was closely related to transformations in organizational life, but few have pursued the relationship as closely as Burnham did. It ought to be clear that the corollary of the thesis that a managerial elite has become the dominant social and political force through its control of mass organizations is that premanagerial bourgeois elites and their supporters have been demoted to the status of a new "proletariat," displaced from political and cultural hegemony, dispossessed of the independence that their property-based order permitted, and subsumed in the mass economic, political, and cultural organizations of the managerial regime. It is noteworthy that Southern Agrarian Allen Tate, in an essay in *Who Owns America?* (1936), the sequel to *I'll Take My Stand*, cites Berle and Means' work on the corporation as the empirical ground of his thesis that "there is a point at which effective ownership ceases, although the legal fictions sustaining 'property' may hold that beyond that point ownership endures. . . . a defender of the institution of private property will question not only the collectivist State, but also large corporate property."

Burnham himself did not believe that organized resistance to the emergence of a managerial regime was practical. He regarded its emergence as historically inevitable and irreversible, and he thought that the most conservatives could accomplish would be to ensure the survival of premanagerial ideas of liberty, law, and civilization within a managerial system. In the last 50 years, nothing has occurred to suggest that either his basic analysis or his belief in the irreversibility of the process he analyzed is false, and until some social force appears that is able to challenge the managerial system and offer an organizational alternative to it, Professor Galbraith and his colleagues in the New Deal will have good reason to celebrate.



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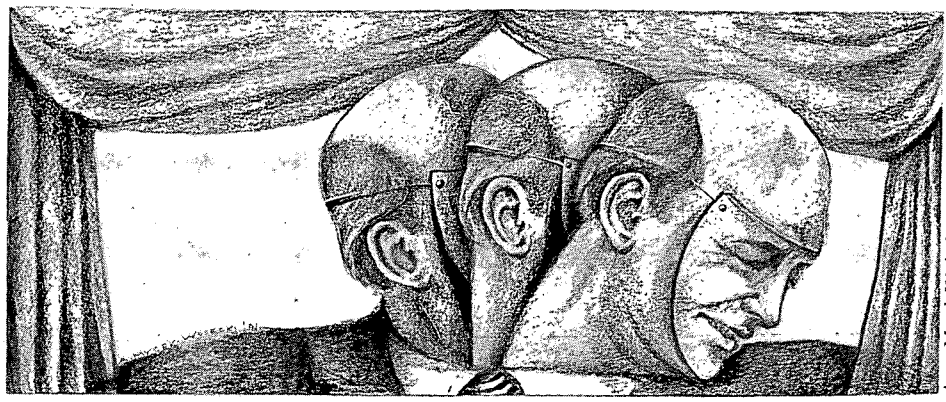
Totalitarianism With a Capitalist Face

by Andrei Navrozov



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

In an essay dated January 1, 1991, and published last July, on the day Mikhail Gorbachev met John Major in London, I forecast the former's demise. "Sadly for his Western admirers," I wrote, "even unprecedented dictatorial powers cannot guarantee political longevity in Gorbachev's case. He is a dictator by the grace of the secret-police apparatus: what it giveth, it can also take away. The issue here is not Gorbachev's 'liberalism,' of course, since if the KGB deems it expedient to stop or turn back the clock of reform he will have no alternative but to do its bidding, convincingly and with enthusiasm."

"But should the KGB find Gorbachev outmoded or ineffective," I went on, "it has at its disposal plenty of fiery 'liberals' ready to step into the dictator's role, and will replace its super-Stalin as easily as Stalin used to replace his secret-police chiefs."

Gorbachev's Western admirers, John Major among them, did not believe me when I wrote that Gorbachev was the most powerful dictator since Stalin's day. Nor did they believe me when I wrote that Gorbachev—despite the colossal power vested in him by the KGB apparatus that had wrested total control from the Communist Party in Brezhnev's last years—did not matter. Two weeks later, George Bush was in Moscow to sign another set of meaningless arms-control accords.

If Gorbachev did not matter, who or what did?

Of the 22 strategically vital technologies officially designated by the Pentagon in 1989 as comprising the key to the balance of military power in the world, the Pentagon now admits that the Soviet Union is ahead of the West in missile antiaircraft defense, ballistic missile defense, antisatellite warfare, chemical and biological warfare, and mines technologies. In specific research fields, the Pentagon now admits that the Soviet Union is superior in pulsed power and at par in hypervelocity projectiles, high-energy density materials, and weapon system environments.

The Pentagon is an eternal optimist. It knows little or nothing of the growing Soviet superiority in fields like high-power microwave systems and directed-energy weapons. It closes its eyes to the fact that the Soviet strategic advance during the years of the Andropov-Gorbachev *perestroika* has permitted the 1986 launch of the permanent space station *Mir*, a feat which the U.S. hopes to duplicate in 1996. That advance is also the basis of the Soviet submarine-building program, with its Alpha class using the space metal titanium for its hull construction. Five new classes of ballistic-missile submarines have been launched in the Soviet Union since *perestroika* began in 1985, in contrast to a single one launched by the United States since 1964.

Perhaps such details are tiresome. Unfortunately they are more genuinely relevant to the story of Gorbachev's rise and fall than all the Kremlinological insights of the past five years put together. Every Soviet "leader," whether an individual totalitarian dictator like Stalin or a front man of the totalitarian oligarchy like Gorbachev, left the Soviet military-industrial infrastructure stronger than he found it.

Their representations of totalitarian reality varied, of course, depending on the relative strength of its military-industrial infrastructure. When the infrastructure was globally powerless in relation to the West's combined industrial might, Khrushchev roared that the Russians could "make missiles like sausages." He was lying. When the infrastructure became globally powerful, overtaking the West in many strategic fields, Gorbachev pleaded that the Soviet Union was "heading for chaos." He was also lying.

The lie of Soviet weakness, complete with the emptiest shelves foreign correspondents in Moscow have ever seen, has served Gorbachev well, even as the lie of Soviet strength—complete with fake Galosh missiles—once served Khrushchev. Détente, launched by Brezhnev in the interim, has flowered under Gorbachev into the present disarmament of Western Europe, sanctioned by Washington. In exchange, Gorbachev "liberated" Eastern Europe. The liberation is also a lie, for without a meaningful deterrent against totalitarian blackmail, political liberties in all of Europe are as illusory as Khrushchev's countless missiles and Gorbachev's empty shops.

The shops were at their emptiest last year, incidentally,

Andrei Navrozov lives in London. Last July, The Claridge Press of London published his essay, The Coming Order: Reflections on Sovietology and the Media, *as part of its "Blasts" series.*

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when the Soviet grain harvest exceeded two hundred million tons. The year Stalin developed the atom bomb the Soviet grain harvest was less than fifty million tons.

Yet instead of looking at the reality of totalitarianism, with its historic chasm between the burgeoning military-industrial and destitute civilian spheres, the West's Sovietologists and the decision-making establishment as a whole chose to look at the "unprecedented" changes in Soviet ideology. Unable to grasp that the discarding of Marxism under Gorbachev had its analogue in the discarding of Bolshevism under Stalin, or that the new Soviet approach to Eastern Europe has its roots in Stalin's restraint in Finland and Austria, Western observers convinced themselves that what they were witnessing was "irreversible."

And so it was. In the context of growing Soviet military-industrial power, the massive infusions of Western science and technology that Gorbachev's totalitarianism with a capitalist face has been able to secure have opened the way to irreversible Soviet dominance over the common Eurasian home. Even if Gorbachev's fall from grace within the KGB oligarchy is permanent and has the effect of a Tiananmen Square, it is highly unlikely that Western business, gearing up since 1986 to sell Moscow whatever science and technology had been withheld before *perestroika*, can now walk away from it all. Nor are the West's conservative governments, mindful of their debt to big business, free to reevaluate their foreign policy in the light of these rude realizations.

Gorbachev has done his KGB employers a lot of good. His abrupt dismissal had nothing to do with the "break-up of the Soviet Union," which the West has been reading into the Union Treaty. Gorbachev was ousted, for inter-oligarchic reasons, as soon as his employers became concerned that he was seeking to accrue powers separate from those of the ruling KGB apparatus. So Khrushchev, who had done his Communist Party employers a lot of good, was ousted when his personal power began to threaten the Politburo's collective leadership.

Is it likely that Washington will now risk "a new Cold War," with which Gorbachev has threatened the West on many recent occasions, or merely beg Moscow to bring back the man with whom "the West can do business"? It is far more likely that the West will interpret Gorbachev's downfall as a temporary wrinkle in the otherwise smooth East-West consensus. After all, it was only the unexpected death of KGB chief Andropov, Gorbachev's mentor and the original architect of *perestroika*, that prevented him from becoming the treasured receptacle of Western wishful thinking that Gorbachev became in 1985. In the coming months, another such receptacle will doubtless be provided by the ruling secret-police apparatus, and Sovietologists will chatter about the personality of the new lucky winner in the Kremlin sweepstakes as exhaustively as the West had studied the old one.

The above political obituary of Gorbachev was published in Britain on August 20 and reprinted in the first days of September by the Hungarian dissident weekly *Beszélö*. I have not changed a single sentence of my original text because I stand by every word I wrote, as I stand by my words of last January.

Since then, the fake coup—which seemed real on August 20 because inter-oligarchic strife has been a genuine feature of Soviet rule since the death of Stalin—has lent the charade of *perestroika* a dimension so vast that unilateral disarmament can now be expected from the West without any further pretense to caution. As I write these lines I read that COCOM, the NATO-sponsored monitor of the West's science and technology export restrictions, has been all but abolished. No Western newspaper so much as reported Gorbachev's demand for its abolition during his July visit to London. I read it in *Pravda*.

What really happened in Moscow? As I write these lines, looking back in September on the events of last August, one thing is immediately clear. The people's power, which frustrated the inept plotters of Gorbachev's downfall and made Yeltsin the hero of the hour, is a myth to many in Russia. Muscovites who watched it emerging in the glare of Western media coverage are increasingly cynical about the plot's happy ending, which has left Gorbachev in effective control of both the military-industrial and the secret-police bases of power. Others are equally apprehensive about the rise of Yeltsin, whom they see as a nationalistic opportunist carving a personal fiefdom out of the totalitarian body politic.

Still other native observers, such as Boris Kagarlitsky writing in *New Statesman & Society*, have gone still further, raising the issue of Yeltsin's complicity in provoking a coup that was never actually intended to topple Gorbachev. What all these eyewitnesses share is an unwillingness to accept the people's power myth, conjured up in different ways by both Gorbachev and Yeltsin only to be echoed uncritically by Western politicians and media. Clearly, the explanation proffered on Soviet television by Gorbachev's loyal ideologist, Alexander Yakovlev, to the effect that the plotters were "fools" and Gorbachev's past association with them was a "mystery," is less than convincing. Thus even the most elementary questions asked by the "coup skeptics" have gone unanswered, and deserve a hearing.

Why was no attempt made to arrest Yeltsin or to cut off his communications? Why did several of the alleged plotters "commit suicide" and one, KGB's Kryuchkov, make use of a TV interview to advertise his "perfect health"? Why, on August 21, did *Pravda* describe the barricades as "stage-set props" and, in its last issue before closure, give space to "persistent rumors that Gorbachev had known of the planned coup in advance"? Why were the only orders received by the Commander of the Moscow Military District "to move out and remain in position"? Why were the tanks arriving in Moscow not battle-ready, without ammunition supplies, and with regulation antiaircraft guns removed? Why were the tanks not accompanied by a single IMR, the unique Soviet military product capable of clearing any barricade in minutes?

These obvious questions frame the fundamental issue of the coup. Did Gorbachev's former associates invent that they had seen him "lying unconscious in bed" when they first came to the Crimea, or did he feign illness to provoke them into their "unconstitutional action"? Did they later fly to the Crimea—instead of out of the country, for instance—in order to seek his explanation for how the misunderstanding had arisen? Had Gorbachev conspired with their

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deputies, such as KGB's Leonid Shebarshin, to ensure that the apparatus of power would be decapitated yet capable of handling the consequences of the provocation? In short, was the reorganization of this apparatus, to be achieved by the eventual amalgamation of the internal security structures with the armed forces, the underlying aim of Gorbachev's coup?

So long as Gorbachev remains in direct control of the apparatus of power, as he now is, this fundamental issue cannot be discounted out of hand. The parallel with Hitler's purge of the SA—"the night of long knives" of June 1934 that is said to have inspired some of Stalin's most subtle maneuvers of the 1930's—suggests itself to those who fearfully watch the unanswered questions mounting.

Like Roehm's *Sturmabteilung*, Andropov's KGB helped to make the dictator but still held enough power to unmake him if necessary. In his drive to maximize personal power, Gorbachev reached the point of no return in January 1990, when he told the Politburo that the state was independent of the Communist Party. Thereafter, Gorbachev *was* the state, albeit by the grace of the KGB that had elevated him and humbled the Communist Party in the process. Like Hitler in 1934, Gorbachev had another move to make: to bite the hand that fed him, decapitating the existing apparatus of power and "subordinating it," in none other than Shebarshin's words of April 1990, "to the state."

Has Gorbachev miscalculated? It is precisely his benevolence toward Yeltsin, whose authority over local government and economic decisions has now increased dramatically, which suggests that the answer is no. By allowing Yeltsin, with or without direct complicity in his own maneuvers, to take center stage and establish alternative authority structures, Gorbachev has distracted the West's attention from the one and only issue that matters: his own control over the reorganized apparatus of power.

Historical precedent supports this conclusion. Hitler's purge of the SA appeared to weaken the state so decisively that, in June 1934, the international diplomatic consensus and Soviet intelligence experts briefing Stalin were unanimous in predicting collapse. Stalin disagreed: "The events in Germany," he remarked, "will lead to the strengthening of Hitler's personal power." Today, many would argue that the rise of Yeltsin in Russia, combined with the "breakup" of what was once the Soviet Union, has made a nonsense of Gorbachev's ambitions.

Yet, as a historian of the Third Reich has written, "contrary to popular opinion totalitarian rule in no way implies a compact and monolithic system of organization," as when Hitler's "federal state was changed into an inextricable system of satrapies" in which many different authorities appeared to rule. "This," Karl Bracher observed, "quickly proved not to be the teething troubles of the new system but part of the system itself," while the Führer "with his control over the direct means of compulsion" emerged as the system's overseer and mediator welcomed or at least tolerated by Germany's future victims.

The precise deployment and future evolution of Gorbachev's power are still to emerge. What seems certain is that both Yeltsin's probable "innovations," such as the restoration of monarchy in Russia, and Gorbachev's own likely "reforms," such as the new, nonconscript, professional army fused with the KGB internal troops, will further disengage international public opinion from the reality of the dictator's permanence. To the West, until last August it still seemed that Yeltsin was a puppet and Gorbachev the man to do business with. Now the roles have been reversed; yet Yeltsin's gains, like those now made by other leaders in the nominally independent Soviet republics, may well advance rather than impede the cause of Gorbachev's newly decentralized totalitarianism.

Thus the KGB-led *perestroika*, which has now ended in the subjugation of the KGB to the state, mirrored Hitler's *Gleichschaltung*, or coordination, which prepared the ground for his pogrom of the SA. In fact, a fuzzy blueprint for the future penned by Gorbachev in September, *The August Coup*, bears comparison with *Mein Kampf*: "As for control over nuclear weapons," he muses, "no one should have any worries on that account. The centre and the President as commander-in-chief remain." Lapsing into the monarchic plural, he writes that "we decided to retain, in addition to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the Committee for State Security as Union bodies."

Gorbachev's book barely mentions the coup but assures the Western reader that his newly consolidated rule is a "new epoch in [Russia's] thousand-year development." He explains that "what is collapsing" is only the pre-Gorbachev "command structure," and in the end "our renewed Union will be filled with life." The "battle," as Gorbachev puts it, "testifies to the modern state" on "the territory of practically a whole continent," an "unprecedented state" involved in "a great integrational process on one-sixth of the territory of our planet." His aim for the "renewed Union," the "originator of the idea of a common European home," is "to be included organically into world civilization" and "moving our country more quickly to acquire the achievements of science and technology."

Above all, "using Lenin's words," what is needed is "one more change in our understanding of what socialism should be." It is this redefined socialism based on concealed military strength that the "renewed Union" will introduce into Eurasia. Gorbachev speaks of socialism and Christianity in one breath, and holds out the "Leninist principle of self-determination" as a workable and trustworthy model for the unified Eurasia to follow. There is no point deceiving ourselves: Gorbachev is in charge, and his book is a chilling insight into the mind of a dictator who is likely to outlast the 20th century.

It was once said that the Reichstag Fire, used by Hitler to insinuate the Nazis into the mainstream of political life, was the longest fire in history, 12 years in the burning. The Soviet Union has now been collapsing for six, with the aim of integrating Gorbachev's postcommunist totalitarianism into the political mainstream of Europe. Provided Gorbachev can continue "applying the principle of divide and rule," as Bracher wrote of Hitler, "with a skill amounting to virtuosity," the fulfillment of that aim is imminent. ◈

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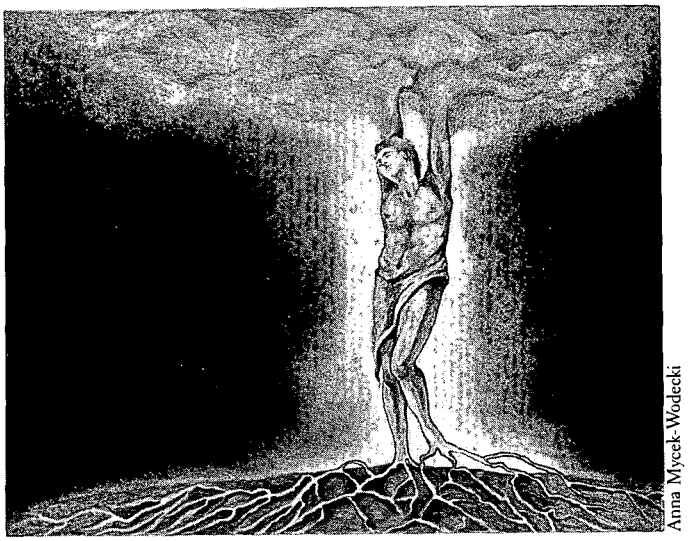
The Decline and Splendor of Nationalism

by Tomislav Sunic



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

No political phenomenon can be so creative and so destructive as nationalism. Nationalism can be a metaphor for the supreme truth but also an allegory for the nostalgia of death. No exotic country, no gold, no woman can trigger such an outpouring of passion as the sacred homeland, and contrary to all Freudians more people have died defending their homelands than the honor of their women. If we assume that political power is the supreme aphrodisiac, then nationalism must be its ultimate thrill.

To talk about nationalism in Anglo-Saxon countries usually evokes the specter of tribalism, violence, heavy politics, and something that runs counter to the idea of progress. For an American liberal, nationalism is traditionally associated with irrational impulses, with something incalculable that has a nasty habit of messing up a mercantile mind-set. A merchant does not like borders and national emblems; his badge of honor is his goods, and his friends are those who make the best offer on the global market. It is no coincidence that during World War II the Merchant preferred the alliance with the Commissar, despite the fact that the Commissar's violence often eclipsed that of the Nationalist. Daniel Bell once wrote that American liberals find it difficult to grasp ethnic infatuation because the American way of thinking is "spatially and temporally suspended." Indeed, to an insular maritime mind, it must appear absolutely idiotic to observe two people quarreling over a small creek or a stretch of land when little economic yield lies in the balance. A politician in America, unlike his rooted European counterpart, is essentially a realtor, and his attitude towards politics amounts to a real estate transaction. It is hard to deny that a person on the move, reared on Jack Kerouac or Dos Passos, is frightened by the ethnic exclusiveness that is today rocking the part of Europe from the Balkans to the Baltics. The mystique of the territorial imperative, with its unpredictable ethnic cauldron, must be a paramount insult to the ideology of the melting pot.

Contrary to widespread beliefs, nationalism is not an ideology, because it lacks programmatic dimension and defies categorization. At best, nationalism can be described as a type of earthbound behavior with residues of paganism. Whereas liberalism operates in the rational singular, nationalism always prefers the irrational plural. For the liberal, the individual is the epicenter of politics; for the nationalist, the individual is only a particle in historical community. To visualize different brands of nationalism one could observe a European family camping on the rocky beaches of the French Riviera and contrast it to an American family on the sandy beaches of Santa Barbara. The former meticulously stakes out its turf, keeps its children in fold; the latter nomadically fans out the moment it comes to the beach, with each family member in search of privacy. Incidentally, the word "privacy" does not even exist in continental European languages.

Following World War II, for a European to declare himself a nationalist was tantamount to espousing neofascism. On the ossuary of Auschwitz, few indeed were willing to rave publicly about the romantic ideas of 19th-century poets and princes, whose idyllic escapades gave birth, a century later, to an unidyllic slaughterhouse. At Yalta, the idea of a Europe frolicking with the liturgy of blood and soil was considered too dangerous, and both superpowers held high this reminder in the form of their respective strategy of "double containment." After their excursion into the largest civil war in history, Europeans decided not to talk about nationalism or self-determination any longer. Many European intellectuals, and particularly German pundits, preferred instead to recommit their suppressed nationalist energy to far-flung Palestinians, Sandinistas, Cubans, or Congolese instead of to their own ethnic soil. Third World nationalism became for the European mandarins both the esoteric catharsis and the exotic superego; and to theorize about the plight of Xhosa in South Africa, or Ibo in Nigeria, or to stage treks to Cashmere or

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Katmandu became an elegant way of wallowing in new political romanticism. This vicarious type of meta-nationalism continued to play a role of psychological repository for the dormant and domesticated Europeans who needed time to heal wounds and wait for yet another renaissance.

Has this renaissance already occurred? The liberal parenthesis that lasted for 45 years, and which received its major boost after the recent collapse of its communist alter ego, may indeed be coming to an end. From Iberia to Irkutsk, from Kazakhstan to Croatia, hundreds of different peoples are once again clamoring for their place under the sun. To assume that they are raising their ethnic voices for economic reasons alone is misleading, and liberals are committing a serious mistake when they try to explain away nationalism by virtue of structuralist-functionalist paradigms, or when they shrug it off as a vestige of a traditional ascriptive society. Contrary to popular assumptions, the collapse of communism in Europe and the Soviet Union is a direct spin-off of ethnic frustrations that have for decades laid dormant, but have refused to die away. The paradox apparent at the end of the 20th century is this: while everybody is talking about integration, multiculturalism, ecumenism, and cosmic fraternity fractures, fissures, and cleavages are appearing everywhere. Paradoxes abound as little Luxembourg preaches sermons to a much larger Slovenia on the utility of staying in the Yugoslav fold; or when Bush, after failing to rescue the Balts, comes to the aid of artificial satrapy in the name of the "self-determination" of its handful of petrocrats; or when Soviet apparatchiks fake concern for the plight of Palestinians only to further crack down against their Bashkirs and Meshkets.

Nationalism is entering today the third phase of its history, and similar to a heady Hydra and howling Hecuba it is again displaying its unpredictable character. Must it be creative in violence only? Ethnic wars are already raging in Northern Ireland, in the land of Basques, in Corsica, let alone in Yugoslavia, where two opposing nationalisms are tearing Versailles Europe apart and showering the treaty successors with embarrassing and revisionist questions.

There are different nationalisms in different countries and they all have a different meaning. Nationalism can appear on the right; it does, however, appear on the left. It can be reactionary and progressive, but in all cases it cannot exist unless it has its dialectical Other. German nationalism of the 19th century could not have flourished had Germany not been confronted by the aggressive French Jacobinism; modern English nationalism could not have taken off had it not been haunted by assertive Prussia. Each nationalism must have its *Feindbild*, its image of the evil, because nationalism is by definition the locus of political polarity in which the distinction between the foe and friend, between *hostis* and *amicus*, is brought to its deadly paroxysm. Consequently, it is no small wonder that intra-ethnic, let alone inter-ethnic, wars (like the one raging today between Croats and Serbs) are also the most savage ones, with each side vilifying, demonizing, and praying for the total destruction of the other.

In addition, side by side with its positive founding myths, each nationalism must resort to its negative mythology, which in times of pending national disasters sustains its people in the fight with the enemy. In order to energize younger generations Polish nationalists will resurrect their dead from the Katyn, the Germans their buried from Silesia and Sudetenland; Croats will create their iconography on their postwar mass graveyards, Serbs their hagiography out of their war-camp victims. Body counts, aided by modern statistics and abetted by high-tech earth excavators, will be completed by mundane metaphors that usually tend to inflate one's own victimology and deflate that of the enemy. German nationalists call Poles "Polacks," and French chauvinists call Germans "boches." Who can deny that racial and ethnic slurs are among the most common and picturesque of weapons used by nationalists world wide?

Nationalism is not a generic concept, and liberal ideologues are often wrong when they reduce European nationalism to one conceptual category. What needs to be underlined is that there are exclusive and inclusive nationalisms, just as there are exclusive and inclusive racisms. Central Europeans, generally, make a very fine distinction between inclusive Jacobin state-determined (*staatsgebunden*) unitary nationalism vis-à-vis the soil-culture-blood determined (*volksgebunden*) nationalism of Central and Eastern Europe. Jacobin nationalism is by nature centralistic; it aims at global democracy, and it has found today its valiant, albeit unwitting, standard-bearer in George Bush's ecumenical one-worldism. Ironically, a drive towards unitary French nationalism existed before the Jacobins were even born, and it was the product of a peculiar geopolitical location that subsequently gave birth to the modern French state. Richelieu, or Louis XIV, were as much Jacobins in this sense as their secular successors Saint-Just, Gambetta, or De Gaulle. In France, today, whichever side one looks—left, right, center—the answer is always Jacobinism. In a similar vein, in England, the Tudors and Cromwell acted as unitary nationalists in their liquidations and genocides—*ad majorem Dei gloriam*—of the Cornish and Irish and a host of other ethnic groups. Churchill and other 20th-century English leaders successfully saved Great Britain in 1940 by appealing to unitary nationalism, although their words would have found little appeal today among Scots and Irish.

Contrary to widespread beliefs, the word "nationalism," (*nazionalismus*) was rarely used in National Socialist Germany. German nationalists in the 1920's and 30's popularized, instead, such derivatives as *Volkstum*, *Volksheit*, or *Volkisch*, words that are etymologically affiliated with the word *Deutsch* and which were, during the Nazi rule, synonymously used with the word *rassisch* ("racial"). The word *Volk* came into German usage with J.G. Fichte in the early 19th century, when Germany belatedly began to consolidate its state consciousness. The word *Volk* must not be lightly equated with the Latin or English *populus* ("people"). As an irony of history, even the meaning of the word "people" in the English language is further blurred by its polymorphous significance. People can mean an organic whole, similar to *Volk*, although it has increasingly come to be associated with an aggregate of atomized individuals. Ironically, the German idea of the *Volk* and the Slavic idea of *narodi* have much in common; and indeed, each group can perfectly well understand, often with deadly conse-

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quences, each other's national aspirations. It is no small wonder that in the German and Slavic political vocabulary the concept of federalism and democracy will acquire a radically different meaning than in linguistically homogeneous England, France, or America.

By ostensibly putting aside its racist past, yet by pushing its universalist message to the extreme, the West paradoxically shows that it is no less racist today than it was yesterday.

French and English nationalisms lack a solid territorial dimension, and their founding myths lie elsewhere. Over the course of their history, due to their colonial holdings, these countries have acted both as European *and* non-European nations—which explains, particularly in the light of massive non-European immigration—why their elites find it difficult to argue for their strong ethnic identity. Continental European nationalism, and specifically the German idea of *Volksheit*, is by contrast the product of a set of geographic circumstances unparalleled in France or England. In France and England, the people were created out of the existence of the state. In Germany and Continental Europe, nationalism has manifested itself primarily as a cultural phenomenon of frequently stateless peoples. In Germany, Poland, Romania, etc., poets and writers created the national consciousness of their peoples; in France, princes created state consciousness. Popular figures in Central Europe—like Herder or Father Jahn in Germany, Sandor Petofy in Hungary, Ljudevit Gaj in Croatia, Vuk Karadzic in Serbia, or Taras Shevchenko in the Ukraine—played a crucial role in laying the foundation of the modern state for their respective peoples. Quite different was the story of nationalism in France where *legists* created the unitary French state by suppressing regionalism in the French *Hexagon*. Similarly, in England, the role of nation-state builders fell to merchants and to maritime companies, which, aided by buccaneers, brought wealth for the English crown. Interestingly, during the Battle of Britain, Churchill even toyed with the idea of transferring Downing Street and the Westminster Palace to the heartland of America—a gesture, which in Central Europe, would have amounted to national suicide.

Like America, France first became a state, and in turn set the stage for the molding of the French people of different tribes; by contrast, Germans have always been a stateless yet *compact* people. The history of France is essentially the history of genocide, in which French rulers from the Capétians to the Bourbons, all the way down to modern Jacobins, meticulously carried out destruction of Occitans, Vendeans, Bretons, Franche-Comté, etc. Suppression of regionalism and nativism has been one of the major hallmarks of French acculturation, with the latest attempt being to frenchify Arabs from the Maghrib countries. Today, France is paying the price for its egalitarian and universalist dreams. On the one hand, it is trying to impose universal values and laws on the masses of Third World immigrants; on the other, it must daily proclaim the principle of self-determination for its multiracial social layers. If one puts things in historical perspective, everything presages that France has become a prime candidate for sparking off racial warfare all over Europe.

Looking at Germany and its East European *glacis*, a sharp eye immediately discovers a fluid area of levitating borders, "seasonal states," yet strong culturally and historically minded peoples. Central and Eastern Europeans have a long ethnic and historical memory, but their borders fall short of clean-cut ethnographic lines. Germany, for instance, offers a view of an open and poorly defined state, yet at the same time it is a close community. By contrast, Jacobin France, functionalist-minded England, and America are geographically closed states, but open societies. Nationalism in these countries has always been inclusive and has invariably displayed globalist and imperialistic pretensions, notably by spreading its unitary message to disparate peoples worldwide.

Geographic location has also affected the ethnopsychology of European peoples. An average German is essentially a peasant; his psychologic cast and conduct are corporate and telluric. A German displays great courtesy but lacks politeness, and like most peasants he usually exhibits a heavy-handed *schwerfällig*, and frequently an awkward approach to social relations. By contrast, a Frenchman, irrespective of his ideological stripe and social background, is always a petty bourgeois; he is full of manners and stylishness but also full of pretensions. Unlike a German nationalist, a Frenchman displays a surfeit of manners but lacks courtesy. Even the most ignorant foreign tourist who goes to Germany and France will notice something foggy and unpredictable about Germans, while at the same time he will be gratified by the German sense of professional correctness and absolute honesty. By contrast, the body language and mannerisms of the French, as appealing as they may be, frequently leave one perplexed and disappointed.

In the course of their ethnogeneses, languages gave final veneer to their respective peoples. The German language is an organic language that branches off into eternity; it is also the richest European language. The French language, similar to a great extent to English, is an opaque language spun more by context than by flexion. As idiomatic languages, French and English are ideal for maritime bustle and seaport activities. Over the course of history the French *sabir* and *pidgin* English proved to be astounding homogenizing agents as well as handy acculturative vectors for the English and French drives toward universalism. Subsequently, English and French became universal languages, in contrast to German, which never spread out beyond the East European marshlands.

The German idea of the Reich was for centuries perfectly adapted to the open plains of Europe, which housed diverse and closely knit communities. Neither the Habsburgs nor the Brandenburgs ever attempted to assimilate or annihilate the non-Germanic peoples within their jurisdiction as the French and English did within theirs. The Danube monar-

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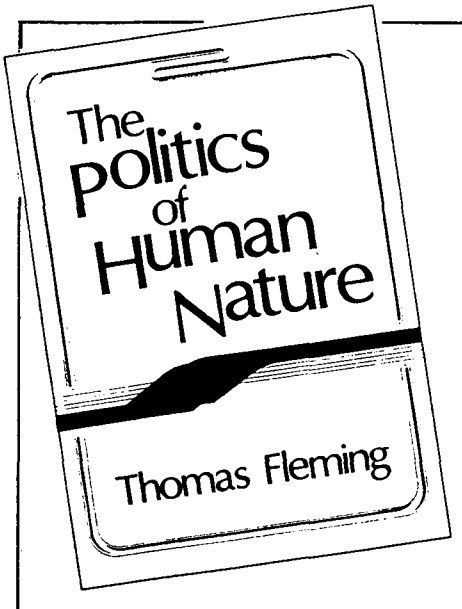
chy, despite its shortcomings, was a stable society, proven by its five hundred years of existence. During the First and Second Reich, principalities, towns, and villages within the bounds of the Austrian and Prussian lands had a large amount of self-government that frequently made them vulnerable to French, Swedish, and English imperial ambitions.

German *Volksheit* is an aristocratic as well as a democratic notion, since traditionally the relations between domestic aristocracy and the German people have been organic. Unlike France or England, Germany never experimented with foreign slavery. In Germany, ethnic differences between the local aristocracy and the German people are minimal; by contrast, in France, Spain, and England the aristocracy has usually recruited from the Northern European leadership class and not the masses at large. Incidentally, even now, despite the exactions of the French Revolution, one can see more racial differences between a French aristocrat and an average Frenchman than between a German aristocrat and a German peasant. In Germany the relationship between the elites and the commoners has always been rooted in the holistic environment, and as a result Germany has remained a society barely in need of an elaborate social contract; it has based social relationships on horizontal hierarchy and corporate structure, buttressed in addition by the idea of "equality among the equals." By contrast, French and English society can be defined as vertically hierarchical and highly stratified; consequently, it should not be surprising that French and English racisms were among the most virulent in the world. It is also worth recalling that the first eugenic and racial laws in this century were not passed in Germany, but in liberal America and England.

Political scientists will one day ponder why the most glaring egalitarian impulses appear in France and America, two countries which, until recently, practiced the most glaring forms of racism. Are we witnessing today a peculiar form of remorse or national-masochism, or simply an egalitarian form of inclusive racism? Inclusive nationalism and racism, that manifest themselves in universalism and globalism, attempt to delete the difference between the foreigner and the native, although in reality the foreigner is always forced to accept the legal superstructure of his now "repented" white masters. By ostensibly putting aside its racist past, yet by pushing its universalist message to the extreme, the West paradoxically shows that it is no less racist today than it was yesterday. An elitist like Vilfredo Pareto wrote that liberal systems in decline seem to worry more about the pedigree of their dogs than the pedigree of their offspring. And a leftist, Serge Latouche, has recently written how liberal racists, while brandishing their ethnic national-masochism, force liberal values and liberal legal provisions upon their "decorative coloreds."

Peoples and ethnic groups are like boughs and petals; they grow and decay, but seldom resurrect. France and England may evoke their glorious past, but this past will invariably have to be adjusted to their new ethnically fractured reality. Lithuania was, several centuries ago, a gigantic continental empire; today it is a speck on the map. The obscure Moscow in the 15th century became the center of the future Russian steamroller because other principalities, such as Suzdal or Novgorod, fantasized more about aesthetics than power politics. Great calamities, such as wars and famines, may be harbingers of a nation's collapse, but license and demographic suicide can also determine the outcome of human drama. Post-ideological Europe will soon discover that it cannot forever depend on the whims of technocratic elites who are in search of the chimera of the "common European market." As always, the meaning of carnal soil and precious blood will spring forth from those who best know how to impose their destiny on those who have already decided to relinquish theirs. Or to paraphrase Carl Schmitt, when a people abandons politics, this does not mean the end of politics; it simply means the end of a weaker people. ◇



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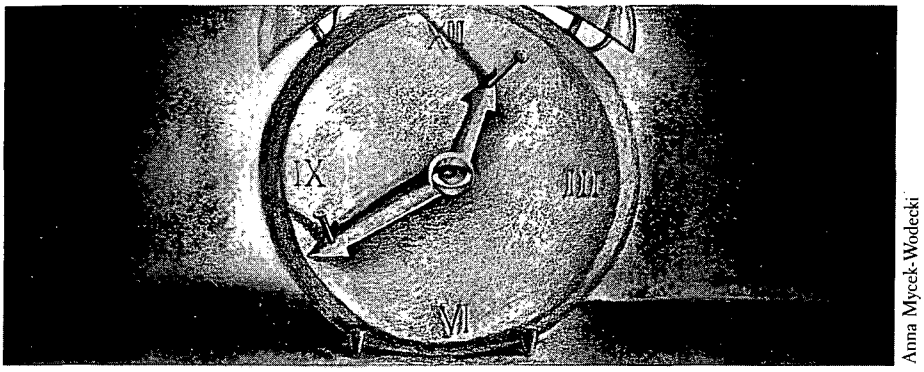
Regression and Renewal

The Prophecies of Pitirim Sorokin

by Harold O.J. Brown



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

In February 1941, the world was at war. Nazism and fascism ruled virtually all of Europe and parts of Africa. Imperial Japan was poised to conquer much of East Asia. Joseph Stalin still controlled the world's largest land mass, although Hitler was soon to shake Stalin's throne. That year, Pitirim A. Sorokin, born in 1889, delivered the Lowell Institute Lectures on the topic, "The Twilight of Sensate Culture." The lectures summarized his four-volume work, *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (1937), which was subsequently reissued in 1957 in a one-volume revision by the author himself.

Although the immense four-volume *Social and Cultural Dynamics* represented many years' work and was prepared for publication in the early days of the Hitler regime, it already took nazism and fascism into account, as well, of course, as communism. Sorokin was the first professor of sociology at the University of St. Petersburg in 1919. As a proponent of non-Bolshevik socialism, he had been sentenced to death but was pardoned by Lenin himself. His opposition to Bolshevism continued, and he was fortunate enough to be expelled from the Soviet Union in 1922. After making his way to the United States, he became a professor at the University of Minnesota. He was called to Harvard University in 1930, where he founded that university's department of sociology. His interest went far beyond mere descriptive sociology; in the years after World War II, he attempted to provide leadership for what he considered the necessary cultural shift from a "sensate" culture (his favored term) to a more idealist one, founding the Harvard Center for Creative Altruism. By altruism, Sorokin, a Russian Orthodox communicant, seems to have meant rather the same thing that Jesus meant when he said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Although I was an undergraduate and a graduate student during Sorokin's last years of teaching, and even had his son Sergei as a lab partner (to whom, with his brother, *Social and Cultural Dynamics* was dedicated), my experience with Pitirim Sorokin himself was limited to hearing him lecture and speak in chapel a few times.

Nineteen ninety-one is the 50th anniversary of those Lowell Institute lectures, which Sorokin brought out in book form in October 1941 with the title, *The Crisis of Our Age*. At that time, Hitler had already invaded Russia and seemed for a brief time, in the magnitude of his conquests, to be about to repeat the exploits of the young Alexander the Great. Japan was on the threshold of her brilliant but brief imperial expansion. The Western democracies were either defeated and occupied (France), beleaguered (Great Britain), or unprepared and isolationist (the United States). Sorokin made no prediction concerning the outcome of the ongoing battles, although in his earlier 1937 work he had foreseen that if an incredibly powerful explosive were invented, certainly some men would prove rash and "scientific" enough to use it.

I bought his *Crisis* in a paperback edition in 1957, without looking at the original date of publication, and promptly assumed it, as a then 16-year-old work, to be out of date. On rereading it 34 years later, I realized that the passage of time has brought ever more compelling confirmation of Sorokin's analysis. What is shocking is that the crisis he predicted 50 years ago, and which he felt must soon lead to a radical reorientation of culture, is still with us. The trends that he felt were reaching their natural limits and would have to break have continued and become more intense and all-pervasive. He ended *The Crisis of Our Age* on a note of guarded and yet rather confident optimism, as indeed he had already done with *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, but the beneficial reorientation that he expected has not yet taken place.

Sorokin's *Dynamics* belongs to a select group of three ambitious works that seeks to unravel the meaning of history and to tell us where it is headed (Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* and Arnold Toynbee's ten-volume *A Study of History* being the others). Sorokin's work is probably the most difficult of the three to read, because he builds it on an incredibly large mass of data. Unlike both

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Spengler and Toynbee, who tend to think in centuries or even longer periods, Sorokin breaks down his analysis of culture—mostly Mediterranean and European—into 20-year periods and provides data virtually year by year.

In the immensely detailed four-volume work, Sorokin discusses, among many other things, the "Fluctuation of Systems of Truth." One section is devoted to what he calls the "eternalistic and temporalistic mentality." (One problem with which Sorokin confronts the reader is his rather specialized terminology.) Most historians have thought in terms of two different approaches to time, cyclic and linear. Cyclic time characterizes Hindu and Buddhist thought, as well as much Greek thought and that of the philosopher Nietzsche: history endlessly repeats itself. Most commentators consider the biblical (Jewish and Christian) concept of time to be linear, beginning with the creation of the world and ending with the coming or second coming of the Messiah. Modern faith in progress is then seen as a secularized variant of the biblical view of linear time.

Sorokin, by contrast, makes the Christian view a variant of the cyclic view, in which repetitive cycles exist but are not identical repetitions of one another, and which differ from the non-biblical views of Indian and Greek thinkers in that there is a goal and fulfillment in the eschatological consummation of all things. For Sorokin the linear view is primarily a sensate, secularistic view that places unlimited and totally unwarranted faith in continual progress.

In his analysis, Sorokin found the 19th century to have been relatively peaceful and prosperous, giving rise to the false hope that the dominant culture of the era (sensate) would lead to still further improvements in the human condition. This hope was dashed by the fact that the 20th century has become the bloodiest of all centuries. He rejected the proud boast of contemporary society that modernity is more humane than the barbarous centuries that preceded it. Sorokin's 1937 work examined crime and punishment through the centuries and concluded that while individual punishments in earlier centuries were frequently cruel, as in the Middle Ages, the number of persons so punished was small, so that in fact there is much more punishment in our own century than in medieval times. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union indeed became virtual concentration-camp societies. Sorokin predicted in 1937 that as a result of the failure of American sensate culture to maintain widely shared ethical values, punishment—primarily imprisonment—would expand tremendously. And this indeed has happened, with the result that prisons in the United States cannot cope with the vast numbers of offenders being sentenced.

Sorokin sees three basic patterns of culture emerging several times in the history of the world: the ideational, sensate, and idealistic. In ideational culture, the truth of faith is dominant. Absolute values prevail, and people expect rewards and punishments from God or the gods, in eternity. In sensate culture, the only values are those which can be perceived by the senses, and the only truth is that which is obtained or supposedly obtained through the sciences. What he calls idealistic culture is largely ideational, modified by a certain respect for science, the senses, and human reason. Augustine is a good example of the ideational value system, Thomas Aquinas of the idealistic, and almost anyone one might mention in the 20th century other than Senator Jesse Helms can serve for the sensate world view.

Sorokin obviously believes in the essential stability of the human race, and for this reason is not surprised when he sees cultural patterns repeating themselves in different centuries. The greatest and plainest parallel is that of the sensate phase of late Greco-Roman culture, during the expansion and decline of the Roman Empire. When sensate values become dominant, life becomes disordered, social structures disintegrate, and a change must take place. Sorokin sees two possibilities: a turning to the truth of faith (ideational culture, in his terms), or an ever-increasing cynicism and despair. He considered Western culture—world culture, really—to have reached a similar situation in the period between the 1930's and the 1950's, so that once again there was a necessity to turn to faith or to descend into ever greater cynicism.

A reader who views things from a Christian perspective will probably agree with Sorokin in his analysis of our culture as late sensate, like that of imperial Rome. He will certainly hope for a return to the "ideational" view, i.e., the world-and-life view of Christian faith that replaced the decaying sensate culture of Rome. Unfortunately, Sorokin's understanding of cultural dynamics would imply that if such a return does occur, it will be only temporary and will be followed by another phase or phases—idealistic and presumably sensate as well. Thus the changes he expects and actually promises seem to offer only a temporary improvement—a new Age of Gold, but one to be followed still again by Brass and by Iron.

The Christian may hope that the eschatological wind-up will occur before this disaster recurs. Indeed, Sorokin seems to share something like this hope: his *Crisis* ends with the words, *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini* ("Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"). This was the acclamation with which Jesus was greeted in the "triumphal entry" to Jerusalem in the week before his crucifixion, and it naturally evokes the coming or the return of the Messiah, which inaugurates the end of history.

The *Crisis*, half a century old in 1991, is essentially a distillation of the immense *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. Read in isolation, it sounds like a *tour de force*, the fruit more of insight or inspiration rather than evidence. Sorokin's *Dynamics* is so immense and detailed that it demands protracted study to digest, but even a rather cursory reading will reveal that Sorokin has marshaled the data to justify his analysis. When the evidence does not permit him to draw conclusions, he does not draw any, as in his discussion of the causes and frequency of war and revolution in the various cultural phases.

He begins his *Crisis* with a criticism of two wrong views: the idea that our society is really not in a crisis, and the conviction that the crisis is indeed upon us and is the death agony of Western society. He stresses the intensity of the crisis but hopes and expects that out of it will come a renewed society, not the death of the West. As he concludes, "Let us hope that the grace of understanding may be vouchsafed us and that we may choose, before it is too late, the right road—the road that leads not to death but to the further realization of man's creative mission on this planet!"

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His analysis of the crisis is broken down into several sections, beginning with the fine arts, and going on to truth, ethics and law, and the contractual family (each of which has a number of subdivisions). Here is a citation from his chapter "The Crisis of the Fine Arts":

> To sum up, contemporary art [in 1941] is primarily a museum of social and cultural pathology. It centers in the police morgue, the criminal's hide-out, and the sex organs, operating mainly on the level of the social sewers. If we are forced to accept it as a faithful representation of man and his society, then man and his cultures must certainly forget our respect and admiration. In so far as it is an art of man's debasement and vilification, it is paving the way for our own downfall as a cultural value.

In Chapter IV, "The Crisis in Ethics and Law," Sorokin speaks of "a progressive devaluation of our ethics and of the norms of our law. This devaluation has already gone so far [1941!] that, strange as it may seem, they have lost a great deal of their prestige as ethical and juridical values. . . . Legal norms, likewise, are increasingly considered as a device of the group in power for exploiting other, less powerful, groups—a form of trickery employed by the dominant class for the subjugation and control of the subordinate classes." This is precisely the contention of the "critical legal studies" that are much in vogue in the most prestigious law schools of our day.

> Having lost their "savor" and efficacy, they opened the way for rude force as the only controlling power in human relationships. If neither religious nor ethical nor juridical values control our conduct, what then remains? Nothing but naked force and fraud. Hence the contemporary "Might is right." This is the central feature of the crisis in our ethics and law. . . .
>
> Any sensory value, as soon as it is put on a plane of relativistic and utilitarian convention, is bound to retrogress, becoming more and more relative, more and more conventional, until it reaches a stage of "atomization" in its relativism and of utter arbitrariness in its ever thinner and less universal conventionality. The final stage is bankruptcy.

Sorokin anticipates modern fears concerning pluralism and multiculturalism in Chapter VI, "Criminality, War, Revolution, Suicide, Mental Disease, and Impoverishment in the Crisis Period": "A society is orderly when its system of culture and social relationships is well integrated and crystallized. It becomes disorderly when this system disintegrates and enters a period of transition." He is aware of the way in which intellectuals and social leaders have fawned on those who would destroy them—an analysis that applies to the attitude of the United States and Canada towards multiculturalism in our own day:

> Even when the explosion of the Bolshevist revolution occurred, killing and mutilating millions, many of the rich aristocracy, statesmen, politicians, professors, ministers and journalists of Western society were entranced by what they regarded as a "wonderful social experiment." Western society behaved in this respect exactly like a degenerate aristocracy on the eve of a revolution which is to deprive it of its preeminent position, its property, and even its life. Such an aristocracy cherishes and lionizes the Rousseaus and Voltaires, socialists and communists, Karl Marxes and Lassals, in the salons of aristocratic ladies, in its academies and colleges, and in the financial quarters of the rich. Exactly the same obtuseness has been manifested in regard to all of the recent revolutions, from the socialist and communist uprisings to those of Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco. . . .
>
> This means that Western society is becoming mentally deranged and morally unbalanced. Additional novelties in the field of criminality are the calculated cold-bloodedness of crimes perpetrated for pecuniary purposes, in contradistinction to the passionate, impulsive, and spontaneous criminality of the past; the efficiency of scientifically organized criminal machines; technologically organized "racketeering" on a large scale in collusion with political leaders and "respected citizens"; and the prominence of the role of the lower age groups in criminal activities.

Sorokin may even have had a prophetic word concerning the present economic situation in the West, which fluctuates between stagnation and decline: "It [society] failed to realize that periods of sharp transition are, without exception, periods of catastrophic economic decline, especially when the transition is from a sensate to an ideational system. Demoralization, disintegration, wars, anarchy, revolutions, criminality, cruelty and other destructive forces are not conducive to business prosperity. Under such circumstances security of possessions disappears; the incentives for efficient work are undermined."

The three great analysts of all things past and present were Spengler, Toynbee, and Sorokin. Spengler saw nothing good in our future and predicted the collapse of our civilization in accordance with the biological model of infancy, youth, maturity, old age, decline, and death. Toynbee appeared, for a time, to be more hopeful and to acknowledge a special role and distinction for Christianity and Western civilization. Only Sorokin, the transplanted Russian condemned to death and pardoned by Lenin, had both a hope for the future and a reason for that hope. One factor, which he only partially took into account, may disturb his calculations: the new and all-pervasive influence of the media. Nevertheless, the 50 years since *The Crisis of Our Age* have only reinforced the accuracy of his analysis. He is all but forgotten in the great university where he spent the last four decades of his life, no doubt because his emphasis on values and his contempt for corruption are politically unfashionable and therefore not the least bit viable there. Those readers who share Sorokin's perceptive vision may take some comfort in his confidence that it is not the end: *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*—not the end of the West, and certainly not the End of All Things. ◈

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Going to Ground

by David R. Slavitt

A green world, buzzing, benign
in hidden glen or hushed glade
where the sun's rays dance on motes
swimming in air like midges, magic,
and, surely, the sound of running water
enlivens the place, an Eden or even
better, our best dream—its serpents
are penises laughing girls have tamed
as amusing pets. There's no such place,
but how can you know when the next rise
could open to show a vista familiar
as childhood's bedroom you still wake to
decades later? (It gives way
to a squalid other, a present you daren't
trust too much.) The arrangements of buildings,
other men's fancies, are arbitrary,
and you deserve and demand more:
a universe that fits you, welcomes,
and celebrates, as your parents did
or ought to have done. If Earth is mother,
however preoccupied and moody
at least sometimes she must feel for us
something like our tender longing
that calls out for its own completion
and at such relenting moments may
smile and offer us that glimpse
of rocks, trees, hillsides, and sky
disposed to conform and satisfy
our unsuspected expectations.
No mere exercise in landscape,
this vision haunts us all our lives
of how the spirit can inhere,
enlivening the mute and brute
objects we stub our toes on. That green
world is where Viola sorts
Orsino out of all that rumple.
Pamina and her Tamino unite
as we hoped they would—but nothing is ever
certain when all are behaving badly,
Calibans let loose. We all
rely on Rosina's gracious pardon
when she forgives her errant Count
in a song that melts and continues to echo
in us as if a mountainside
itself were singing where we'd choose
to settle—had we not always lived there.

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Magna Mater, Full of Grace!

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

"Nature, which is the time-vesture of God and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish."

—Thomas Carlyle

The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology
by Max Oelschlaeger
New Haven: Yale University Press; 488 pp., $29.95

The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays by Aldo Leopold
Edited by Susan L. Flader and J. Baird Callicott
Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press; 384 pp., $22.95

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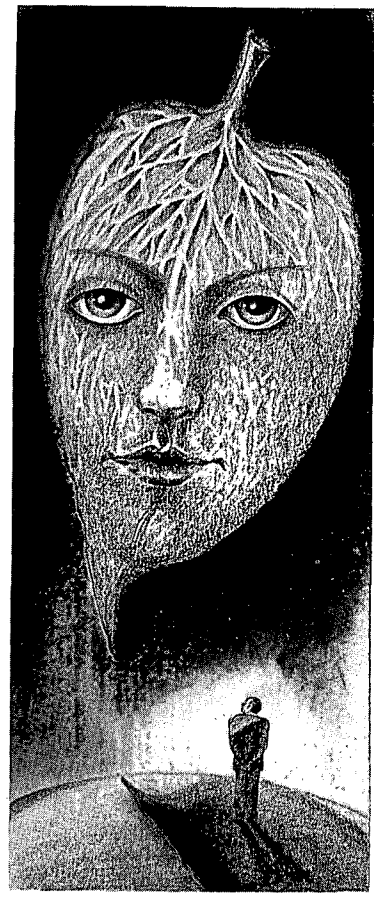
I don't believe I realized, until I began reading up on the subject of Deep Ecology, how far the rot of despair and self-loathing has penetrated the Western world. Multiculturalism as an expression of the West's failure of nerve and of confidence in its own traditions seemed bad enough. In Deep Ecology, Western anomie is given scope to deplore twelve thousand years of human civilization, which Deep Ecologists believe was fatally misdirected about 10,000 B.C., when Paleolithic societies of hunter-gatherers became agriculturalists at the start of the Neolithic era. You'd think the Afrocentrists at Stanford would be acting a little less smug these days.

If the Heritage Foundation on the subject of environmentalism makes me feel like George Washington Hayduke in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, Earth First! on almost any topic brings out my Flem Snopes side. It is characteristic of societies that have lost touch with truth, which is single yet at the same time complex, to think that something



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

in order to be anything must be everything; for people living in the modern era, a thing is all or it is nothing. The earth is either sacred, or it is mere stuff. It is to be worshiped intact and inviolate, or it is to be exploited as a cornucopia of resources for human beings to consume. Those are the choices acknowledged by the great majority of contemporary writers, and people who cannot or will not accept unequivocally one or the other of them are dismissed as quislings, tergiversators, and moderationists. "Conservatives," with tongues thickened by fervent repetition of the liturgy, mumble the Biblical injunction to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it, and deny that there is or ever could be environmental catastrophe ahead; radicals and liberals rant against anthropocentrism and speciesism and prophesy an impending "ecocrisis." The radicals would be more persuasive were it not for self-hatred and the well-grounded suspicion that they are attempting to replace the failed economic argument for the destruction of civilization with the ecological one, while the "conservatives" would sound more plausible had they not proven themselves in power to be as selfish and irresponsible as the liberals, and as fundamentally committed to merely economic ends rather than to principle, tradition, and sanity. "The evolutionary paradigm," Max Oelschlaeger writes in *The Idea of Wilderness*, "(alternatively: organism and not mechanism) will likely rule the postmodern world"; the 21st century, he believes, will be the century of ecology, as the 20th was the age of economics. I think that Mr. Oelschlaeger may well be correct in his prediction, which is why it seems to me necessary for conservatives (as distinguished from "conservatives") to take the environmental argument seriously and debate it carefully and conscientiously. It is crucial that sane people—Christians especially—provide it with a foundation as different as possible from that constructed from the absurd premises and insane conclusions of Deep Ecology. That way, come the ecocrisis, we shall be prepared to meet it as the sons of God rather than as brothers to the grizzly bear.

Although it carries the Yale University imprint, *The Idea of Wilderness* is

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not a work of scholarship but of imaginative intellectual synthesis that in better and less frivolous times would have been published by a sober trade house. Its thesis, stated succinctly by the author, is straightforward. "In context, ideas of wilderness (Paleolithic, ancient, modern, and postmodern) appear as historically inevitable. If the hypothesis that the idea of wilderness is linked with the developing character of human existence is cogent, then the contemporary wilderness philosophy represents more than the extolling of the recreational value of wild nature, retrograde romanticism, or mystical escape from an over-populated, industrialized, anxiety-ridden, polluted, and violent world." Instead, it develops the understanding that, "We are not the privileged children fashioned in the image of God but coordinate interfaces of the historical process of nature. We do not impose value on a valueless cosmos; rather, we are sensitive registers of values created through the unfolding of time." Thus, "the emerging postwilderness philosophy is more than environmentalism in new guise. It represents a convergence of scientific research and reflective thought on the premises that the human and cultural —including the ethical, theological, and philosophical—are linked with the material and organic. . . . [T]he idea of wilderness in postmodern context is . . . a search for a new meaning—for a new creation story or mythology —that is leading humankind out of a homocentric prison into the cosmic wilderness."

According to Oelschlaeger, Paleolithic man did not regard himself as existing at a remove from nature, but rather as a complementary part of it. He lived in reverential and nonexploitive harmony with the natural world and thought of it in all its interwoven and mutually supporting aspects as a sacred entity, filled with spirits and symbolized as the Magna Mater. The concept of wilderness was one he had no means of recognizing. For perhaps two hundred thousand years—"the hegemony of the Great Hunt"—mankind lived the archaic life of the hunter-gatherer before the Mesolithic transition to "agri-culture" occurred. Oelschlaeger denies emphatically that any economic motive or "longing for civilization and abhorrence of wild nature" led to "agri-culture"; he suggests that population pressures, climatological changes, and human nature helped bring about the shift. Although human beings continued to inhabit a sacralized cosmos, "Once humans became agriculturalists, the almost paradisaical character of prehistory was irretrievably lost," since farmers assumed the task of subduing the wilderness and men acquired the habit of drawing boundaries between nature and culture. This process Oelschlaeger associates with "the so-called Fall": "The Neolithic mind no longer thought of itself as the child of Magna Mater. . . ." Agriculture begot in turn the mental and material preconditions for theology and philosophy and the emergence of modern civilization, until history, as it is said, began at Sumer. As agriculturalists worked at taming and managing nature, men began to wonder whether the world were not in fact designed for their own ends; but although they ceased to worship animal gods and began reverencing anthropomorphic ones instead, no major change in religious attitudes occurred until the Hebrews and "the birth of historical consciousness." The Hebrew prophets were the first people to associate truth with the supernatural rather than with the natural, while during "classical antiquity human effort was effectively redirected from the physical and economic world to the intellectual and spiritual."

Oelschlaeger is easier on Judaism and Christianity than many critics of his type have been, stressing the degree to which the Old Testament supposedly incorporates Paleolithic and Neolithic attitudes sympathetic to nature. Nevertheless, the fusion of elements of Greek rationalism with Hebrew and early Christian thought ("a peculiar combination of Attica with Jerusalem") produced ultimately the concept of wilderness that has "fatefully" directed the development of Western civilization over two millennia. In the course of this period, the "Judeo-Christian" idea of the world as having been created by a loving Father in six days for the benefit of His children was replaced by the Newtonian-Cartesian one of the world as a mere machine, governed by immutable laws that made changes in it impossible and built by an impersonal God, whose animals were also machines and where the boundary between mind and matter was absolute. Both of these ideas were finally superseded by the evolutionary view developed by Darwin, which led to the discovery of "the inescapability of time" and revealed "the impossibility of a divine or Parmenidean vantage point from which to describe reality." By the evolutionary concept, the errors of the past twelve thousand years have been revealed, and contemporary man is granted the choice of continuing on what Bill McKibben in *The End of Nature* calls "the defiant road" or accepting the "humble" one through the rediscovery of the wisdom of his Paleolithic forebears and the creation of what Oelschlaeger terms an "old-new" synthesis, a "posthistoric primitivism."

Oelschlaeger reveals his hostility to Christianity by degrees. His use from the beginning of the book of "B.C.E." for "B.C." is an early warning sign. (Whether Max Oelschlaeger believes in the divinity of Christ or not, does he really disbelieve in His historical existence? Plenty of agnostics, acknowledging the findings of modern Biblical scholarship, have granted that much.) In due course, he condemns the intolerable arrogance of accepting one's self as made in God's image and set at the head of creation. Since Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and others regard this idea as a truth revealed by God to man, and not by man to God, Oelschlaeger's indignation is patently silly. For Oelschlaeger, God as a transcendent Being is nonexistent: rather, "the entire physical universe [may] be the medium of expression of the mind of a natural God. In this context, God is the supreme holistic concept, perhaps many levels of description above the human mind." As for the argument from design, Oelschlaeger claims it was exploded by George P. Marsh, whose *Man and Nature* appeared four years after *The Origin of Species* and whom Oelschlaeger credits with having proved that, "the notion of any primal consonance simply could not be reconciled with the facts."

Unfortunately for Deep Ecology, the notion is nonsense that while God might have made the universe in a single act of creation lasting six days, it is impossible for Him to have created it

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by evolutionary process. God, by definition, can do anything He pleases, as Blaise Pascal pointed out three centuries ago. In Matthew 13:31-32, Christ gives us the parable of the mustard seed: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air can come and shelter in its branches." Who says that God cannot think evolutionally? Yet Oelschlaeger assures us that the "prevailing Judeo-Christian" conception of the universe has been "intellectually discredited." Really? If so, by whom? Certainly not by Max Oelschlaeger, who appears to be unaware that modern science, theoretical physics especially, so far from having confounded the possibility of supernatural reality has substantiated the likelihood of it. What Oelschlaeger means is that the *acceptability* of Christian truth has been *denied* by a broad sector of the contemporary world. But that of course is another matter entirely.

A second development of which Oelschlaeger seems to be ignorant is Christianity's own version of postmodernism (see James Hitchcock's review in this issue of *After Ideology* by David Walsh). Christian postmodernists are unhappy with the modernist world for many of the same reasons the Deep Ecologists are; they agree with them and with Mircea Eliade that *Homo religiosus* has been supplanted by *Homo economicus*, a species whose problems with such concepts as the sacred versus the profane are notorious. The difference is that David Walsh's postmodernists find their inspiration in the civilized Mediterranean Basin of the first centuries A.D., not, like Max Oelschlaeger's, in the Mesopotamian wilderness of two hundred thousand B.C.E.

An orthodox Catholic and fellow-traveler of the environmentalist movement myself, I have no trouble agreeing with the proposition that Christians have historically been guilty of undervaluing nature in ways they assume are consistent with their faith. They have been guilty of undervaluing many other things as well; yet the fault lies not in their religion but in the human fallibility that can lead them into misinterpretation of it. There is nothing anywhere in the Bible that enjoins us to be anything but conscientious stewards of the land and its creatures, and as for wilderness John the Baptist lived in it and Christ Himself withdrew to it to fast and pray. True, the supernatural principle is exalted in the New Testament above the natural one; but again, why do moderns tend to assume that if a thing cannot be accepted as being of the highest value, it must therefore be treated as worthless? (Even so, Christ taught the resurrection of the body and went so far as to provide a demonstration of it.) The destruction of nature is part of what Oelschlaeger himself acknowledges as "the modern project"; now that we are experiencing the effects of that project on the natural world, even people who believe that they are supernatural beings destined for eternal life are beginning to reconsider the question of the right relationship between man and nature.

Max Oelschlaeger, in *The Idea of Wilderness*, works hard to appropriate Aldo Leopold as an early Deep Ecologist, but in this he is notably unsuccessful. Leopold (1886-1948) made his career in the U.S. Forest Service, where his was a stentorian voice on behalf of wilderness preservation. He has been called the father of wildlife management, and he was also the author of several books (including *A Sand County Almanac*, today regarded as a classic) as well as of numerous essays. *The River of the Mother of God* is a selection from these, published and unpublished; while many are of an essentially technical rather than a philosophic or literary nature, nearly all of them make good reading. Leopold, a graduate of the Lawrenceville School and of Yale University, was a highly civilized man who wrote with great clarity and elegance, and though a visionary he was not insane. He grasped firmly the extent to which, "Plants, animals, men, and soil are a community of interdependent parts, an organism," deplored what he called the "iron-heel mentality" typical of the Machine Age, and argued, "All history shows this: that civilization is not the progressive elaboration of a single idea, but the successive dominance of a series of ideas. . . . Engineering is clearly the dominant idea of the industrial age. What I have here called ecology is perhaps one of the contenders for a new order."

"A thing is right," Leopold stated in what became the maxim for his famous "land ethic," "when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." Wilderness and economics he thought to be "mutually exclusive," and for that reason unreconcilable. But he believed also that, "[the] extension of ethics . . . is actually a process in ecological evolution. . . . The first ethics dealt with the relationship between individuals. . . . Later accretions dealt with the relationship between the individual and society." While recognizing that, "There is as yet no ethic dealing with man's relationship to land and to the non-human animals and plants which grow upon it," Leopold suggested that the extension of ethical principles to this third element of human relational experience was "an ecological possibility." In the meantime, he advised, "the reaction of land to occupancy determines the nature and duration of civilization."

If you are so much as thinking of converting to ecology, the writings of Aldo Leopold should be the object of your earliest inquiries. ◈

LIBERAL ARTS

IT'S THE TROUT, NOT THE TEACHERS

Scientists last summer said toxic chemicals were robbing children of their ability to learn and think. The *Chicago Tribune* quoted Dr. John Vallentyne, the Canadian chairman of the Great Lakes Science Advisory Board, as saying, "The evidence suggests that these chemicals may be whittling away the innate potential within our species to learn and think." The science board concluded that children from mothers who consumed contaminated Lake Michigan fish had short-term memory and poorer verbal skills than "normal" youngsters.

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The Spirit of the Age

by Matthew Scully

"Money is human happiness in the abstract; he who can no longer enjoy happiness in the concrete devotes himself entirely to money."
—Schopenhauer

Imperial Masquerade: Essays by Lewis H. Lapham
by Lewis H. Lapham
New York: Grove Weidenfeld;
397 pp., $22.50

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The Lewis Lapham story, as recounted in his earlier books, *Fortune's Child* and *Money and Class in America*, is that of a rich boy who, having been exposed as a reporter to the lot of the poor, renounces the "authority of wealth" and turns his trenchant wit to leveling all its pretenses and privileges. The latter book, published in 1988, carried the subtitle *Notes and Observations on Our Civil Religion*, his point being that in America the pursuit of money had acquired an almost sacramental character. "Never in the history of the world," he wrote, "have so many people been so rich; never in the history of the world have so many of those same people felt themselves so poor."

A noble observation, and no one reading his books will doubt the degree of conviction Mr. Lapham brings to the subject of wealth and poverty. Equally clear, however, is his responsibility to provide some sort of direction for those whose empty lives he is attempting to illuminate. When Mother Teresa offers similar reflections on the poverty of great wealth, we know her answer to the problem—charity, self-renunciation, poverty of spirit. But Mr. Lapham's insistently secular answer is not quite so clear. If, as he told an interviewer, his books are "an exorcism, a necessary working-out of my own attitudes toward money," what has supplanted those false values? With what would he replace America's "civil religion"?

With "merely human values," he writes in *Imperial Masquerade*, Mr. Lapham's reflections on America in the 1980's. Gathered mostly from his "Notebook" column as editor of *Harper's*, the essays, he declares in the forward, "take as their common text the attitudes, suppositions and habits of mind that sustained the spirit of an age." And the age, alas, was the height of greed as a civil religion. More than ever, America under Ronald Reagan was a society caught up "in its dream of innocence as well as its dream of power," at the expense of the merely human values that would lead us to care for the poor and fill the "moral emptiness" of modern life. Politics became theater, a pretense, a fiction allowing us to indulge "the comforts of a vacant conscience." Even his fellow journalists sat enthralled by the spectacle, but as for Mr. Lapham, "I could never escape the suspicion that I was asked to applaud the performance of an imperial masquerade."

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

He never does, in the course of 70 essays, quite explain what these merely human values are, or why they conflict with the harsh "transcendental impulse" that attempts to bring the divine to bear upon human affairs—a theme of the book—or, if his own merely secular values are to stand in place of transcendent ones, what the source of *their* authority might be.

Those questions, though, are secondary to understanding *Imperial Masquerade*, for the book turns out to be something of a grand "performance" itself: marked by considerable literary skill, but marred by theatrical airs. If modern politics is a masquerade, a surreal acting-out of fantasy and self-delusion, then it is a mad spectacle from which Mr. Lapham himself has yet to find escape.

If this seems harsh—who among us is without his absurd vanities?—consider "Reagan's Academy Award," an essay published in *Harper's* just before inauguration day. Election Eve, 1980, he recalls, found Mr. Lapham driving near an East Harlem slum where he noticed "a neon sign flashing the message GOOD LUCK REAGAN." The words

> appeared at the base of a billboard raised up on the rubble of the East Harlem slum. Not knowing who owned the billboard, or who had thought it worthwhile to buy space on Mr. Reagan's behalf, I couldn't decide whether the intention was sentimental or sardonic. Depending on the inflection of the voice, I could hear the words pronounced either as a

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pious wish or a cynical farewell.

The ambiguity of the greeting corresponded to the irony implicit in the view to the west.

. . . meaning New York City in all its affluence. The rubble of the tenements in the foreground, set against that "resplendent" metropolis glittering in the distance, leads him in the course of his essay to resolve the subtle ambiguity with the conclusion it was, alas, a cynical farewell. If there is a fiction to be exposed here, it is not Ronald Reagan's policies towards the poor, but the essayist's search for the poignant detail with which to open his next commentary on conservative insensitivity.

Equally tiresome is the air of disgust with which Mr. Lapham dismisses Reagan's "chaotic" and "incoherent" philosophy. One could be more sympathetic toward Mr. Lapham if only he himself, reflecting for a moment that Mr. Reagan and others whom he opposes are also merely human and prone to misjudgments, were less smug. Instead, just about every conservative who passes by in the imperial masquerade is a hypocrite or impostor, and Lewis Lapham alone notices the misery of the slums and the broken dreams and the quiet longings of his fellow men.

Mr. Reagan's ideas, he writes in one of these indictments, were so "unsystematic," so "incoherent," not sophisticated and "realistic" like liberalism, "America's generously optimistic tradition." "The comforts of a vacant conscience," moreover, allowed America under Mr. Reagan "not to worry itself with tiresome questions about what was right and what was wrong, or what was true and what was false." "It was clear from the beginning that Mr. Reagan wasn't interested in bad news," for this might have upset his listeners and cost him votes. Making the rich richer "was the only promise Mr. Reagan kept."

In developing these insights, Mr. Lapham overlooks some not too intricate flaws in his own thought. For one thing, it is contradictory to say that Reagan was both unconcerned about "right and wrong" yet excessively moralistic on such matters as abortion and "the Wagnerian stage set of the Evil Empire." You can fault him for one or the other, but not both. And, too, when Reagan took the position that abortion is killing, whether one agreed or not that surely was intended as a bit of "bad news" to a society which tolerates about a million-and-a-half abortions each year — news delivered at the risk of estranging a lot of voters, notably Lewis Lapham and the entire media establishment. This raises the further contradiction that Mr. Lapham had so many angry essays to write during the 80's precisely because Reagan in fact kept most of his promises — for instance, by acting on his anti-abortion principles and by employing all those "merchants of death" at the Pentagon.

And the odd thing is, when you pause to examine precisely what Mr. Lapham's own merely human values amount to, they almost always have something to do with money. One admires his insight that greed can become a civic religion. What he doesn't see, however, is that like most temptations greed can assume the form of its opposite, so that we can succumb just when it appears we are being the most noble or altruistic. The authority of wealth — how it is acquired, spent, doled out — thus remains the decisive influence in his moral thought; underlying even his most exalted sentiments one detects the merely monetary. You would expect, for instance, to find somewhere in the book a thoughtful piece on abortion — whichever side one takes, a vital index to the spirit of an age. Mr. Lapham, however, enters the great debate only when the specific question is one of payment. If the rich can have abortions, do not civilized standards demand that the poor and underprivileged should have them too?

That there might be a deeper spiritual or even merely human dimension beyond the "small sum" denied the poor for their abortions simply has not registered. Nor does he think to apply his other frequent theme — the Powerful versus the Powerless — to the treatment of unborn life, for this would require a rethinking of liberalism's "generously optimistic tradition." Whatever the moral issue — abortion, America's housing problem, the doctrine of military deterrence — it always seems to turn back to those grasping, sanctimonious Republicans denying poor people their rightful share of the loot.

Only rhetorically does he ever escape the who-gets-what moral calculus. A word search on Mr. Lapham's computer would turn up hundreds of examples of Christian imagery, advancing one or another secular or purely economic argument: "The search for the innocent investment seems to me comparable to the search for the Holy Grail. . . . [T]he worship of technology serves the cause of barbarism. The pleading of the deity in the machine makes it much easier to discard the value of the merely human. . . . By reducing words to objects, the Christian propagandists transformed language into stone, thereby forming an ecumenical union with those totalitarian states against which they hurled the clichés of freedom. . . . Whether employed in the service of religion or the service of the state, the transcendental voice shouts down the objections of the merely human." Or finally this: "Like the bones of Saint Theodosia, the arsenal of deterrence stands as both symbol and embodiment of absolute power. What was human becomes divine. The Pentagon spends a great deal of its money buying high-tech weapons so delicate and fundamentally useless as to acquire the beauty of religious sculpture."

Even forgetting the stuff about turning language into stone and ecumenical unions and Saint Theodosia, what a confused, deeply troubling outlook. Religious sculpture is nice to look at but fundamentally useless because, one assumes, it reaches beyond the merely human, deludes the poor with false hopes, and like the arsenal of deterrence probably costs too much besides. And it only reminds us of that unsettling transcendental "shout."

No doubt from such a view the transcendental voice does seem to shout instead of beckon, as "the divine" must seem an archaic but ever-impressive bit of imagery to be tossed about like any other; so much the better if it belittles the "Christian propagandists" for whom it actually means something. That it might represent the one authentic voice in the entire masquerade, is a possibility simply not to be found in the book.

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Primal Existentialism

by James Hitchcock

After Ideology: Recovering the Spiritual Foundations of Freedom
by David Walsh
San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco; 296 pp., $29.95

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This is an important and optimistic book, and the fact that it has been published by a major secular publishing house perhaps bears out the author's thesis that Western culture is ripe for a major spiritual revival.

On one level, *After Ideology* is another statement of the now familiar "bankruptcy of secular liberalism" idea that has been current for a long time. David Walsh, who is a professor of political thought at the Catholic University of America, argues persuasively that liberalism, by weakening the moral basis of humanity, has undercut its own foundation. Liberalism asserts an expanding list of personal "rights" without being able to state why such rights are important, and whence they derive. At the same time as it attempts to expand the scope of "human dignity," liberalism also moves with equal determination to deny or "demythologize" traditional beliefs about the spiritual nature of humanity, which alone make that dignity possible.

In Walsh's view, the gap between democratic liberalism and totalitarianism is by no means as wide as is conventionally thought, since both deny fundamental spiritual reality. But Walsh thinks that most statements of this dilemma, such as Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, fall short because they make merely theoretical statements of the problem, asserting premises that do not persuade the skeptic. What is needed now is a breakthrough to a "primal existential experience" that will reveal these truths in a new and powerful way. Walsh is emphatically not granting experience itself the ultimate authority. He argues for an act of faith in "traditional symbols," including theological doctrines, but also for an attempt to penetrate to the formative experience that first brought those symbols into being. Fyodor Dostoyevsky's last-minute reprieve on the scaffold and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's life in the gulag are, he believes, prime instances of such experiences. Dostoyevsky and Solzhenitsyn are, of course, Russian Christians, but Walsh also considers the agnostic (atheist?) Albert Camus and the religiously ambivalent Eric Voegelin, in particular showing how Camus' existentialism led to a confrontation with the ultimate religious questions, and to a revelation of the final absurdity of purely secular answers.

Inevitably, Walsh makes much of the collapse of secular utopianism in our time, and thus by implication of all ideologies of complete human autonomy and self-fulfillment. What is needed now is a "catharsis" from modernity, in which errors recognized as such at the intellectual level are purged from the Western soul. Some of the argument is at least questionable in its historical dimension, especially the attempt to trace modern utopianism to Renaissance humanism. On the whole, however, it is a powerful and compelling book. Its chief weakness, ironically, may be that it necessarily partakes of that same abstract quality that Walsh criticizes in thinkers like MacIntyre.

For modernity as it now exists cannot be treated simply as a derivation from a series of major thinkers such as Marx and Nietzsche. Popular culture, possessing at best only a very indirect relationship to philosophy, now has a life of its own to a degree that was perhaps never true at any time in the past. Spiro Agnew spoke of the "silent majority," and as late as about 1970 it was still possible to regard popular culture as essentially conservative, a bulwark of resistance to intellectual and moral changes fostered by various elites. That is no longer the case and, to the degree that intellectuals sober up and contemplate the loss of spiritual rootedness, they may find that "the masses" have little interest in, or sympathy with, such a revival.

What modern culture has finally spawned—through schools, churches, mass media, and corporations—is a rootless hedonism that validates itself on the basis of nothing more than immediate experience and that owes little to any utopian vision. In many ways this culture is apolitical and observes the collapse of communism with merely detached approval; the next stage of history, according to this view, being simply the extension of the benefits of the hedonistic society to those peoples hitherto ground under the totalitarian heel.

Thus far there appears to be only one effective way by which people experience a "catharsis" that enables them to turn away from hedonism and reestablish contact with the "existential experience" underlying traditional symbols, and this is personal, evangelical, religious conversion—a conversion that is sometimes profound, and other times from the viewpoint of both traditional religion and traditional philosophy, sentimental. It is significant that Walsh, though a professor at a Catholic university, does not teach theology. While one might suppose that theologians, distressed by the religious aridity of modern culture, would be the people most inclined to search eagerly for signs of a fundamental cultural shift, in truth most working theologians have an ideological stake in the cultural conditions that Walsh deplores—a fact that has much to say about the nature of the coming spiritual revival, or even whether there is to be one.

But no author should be faulted for the book he did not write, and we should be grateful to David Walsh for diagnosing the disease and suggesting possibilities for its cure with unusual profundity and clarity.

James Hitchcock is a professor of law in history at St. Louis University. His most recent book is Years of Crisis, 1970-1983 *(Ignatius Press).*

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Philosophy in an Old Key

by E. Christian Kopff

A Parliament of Souls: Limits and Renewals, Volume II
by Stephen R.L. Clark
Oxford: Oxford University Press; 208 pp., $49.95

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In the ancient world no one could talk or read too much about philosophy. Wealthy Athenian nobles, Plato and Xenophon, for instance—even Roman emperors, like Marcus Aurelius—lived for the hours they could devote to philosophical discourse. The pagan's conversion to philosophy was as important to him as conversion to Christ was for a Christian. When his political career came to an end, Cicero composed masterful Latin versions of Greek thought and considered his time well spent.

Things are different now, of course. Religion has replaced philosophy for the average person. Philosophers are academics and by concentrating on technique have managed to turn a subject that could excite a normal, healthy young aristocrat like Xenophon into a "field" as quibbling and repellent as Aristophanes' famous parody of Socrates' school in *The Clouds*. Professional philosophers know something is amiss and have tried to get back in touch with a wider public. One result has been a split between those who "do philosophy" and those who "do history of philosophy," i.e., discuss the texts that hand down what thinkers of yore thought. Is it possible to make an original contribution to today's intellectual and moral problems by reading texts written hundreds, even thousands of years ago?

Stephen Clark, professor of philosophy at the University of Liverpool, says "yes." In 1973, his *Aristotle's Man* awoke us to the many insights the Master of those-who-know still has to offer our world. Since then, Clark has written books on the moral status of animals and on "animals' rights," as well as his brilliant Gifford Lectures on natural theology, *From Athens to Jerusalem* (1984). He is now involved in a three volume series, *Limits and Renewals*, trying to open up the closed shop of contemporary academic philosophy.

A number of academic disciplines have advanced by narrowing and concentrating their vision, by excluding the role of purpose. Modern linguistics and physics would not exist without that heroic and successful asceticism. Self-control, however, is one thing; starvation, something quite different. Philosophy's historic mission has been to understand the world, and that mission cannot succeed by refusing to think about great chunks of that world. Some disciplines have profited from relegating God and purpose, devils and angels to a neighboring room. Philosophy has been reduced to debating whether other minds even exist. Berkeley's John Searle has been subjected to ridicule for suggesting that there are rational reasons for believing that our language refers to an objective reality outside itself.

Stephen Clark tells us in *Civil Peace and Sacred Order* (1989) and *A Parliament of Souls* that it makes no sense to talk about politics and what human beings do and are without talking about God and an objective moral order. Philosophers should not only read the great philosophers of the past, and that means Plotinus as well as Plato and Aristotle; they should also read great literature, and even pretty good literature, ranging from Gerard Manley Hopkins to Rudyard Kipling and on to Olaf Stapledon, who wrote science fiction in the 30's and 40's.

The enemy is reductionism. Human beings are much closer to other animals than utopian fantasies allow for. (Testosterone lives!) At the same time, human life and achievement make no sense unless we posit a spiritual level. The individual is no self-contained reality, but a Platonic form, filled with forces from below and above. The Greeks were right to think of violence and lust, Ares and Aphrodite, as powers that can and do take over mortals and use them as they will. Homer's picture of Aphrodite ordering Helen into Paris's bedroom after he has run away from battle is a truer picture of the human condition than the image of the rational decision-maker of modern individualism. (Clark even promises us in volume three a defense of Marcus Aurelius' speculation that this world is but a dream and a delusion.)

Harvard's John Rawls wants us to determine what is just by working out laws that will seem fair to any set of individuals not prejudiced by historical background, socioeconomic status, and a crippling early family life. There are, however, no individuals that are not the result of genes, history, family, religion, and language, to name just a few factors. Yet the individualist wants to make an absolute out of his passing fancies for war or for peace, for a bizarre misinterpretation of a poem, or for another person's wife. The individual is real. The "outside" world is only his interpretation. Even something as common as the colors that clothe the world are cultural agreements, with no basis in nature. (The ancient Epicureans knew this, of course.) We might answer that just because the Greeks called blood purple and the sea "wine-faced" while we call them red and blue, does that mean that there is no sea, no blood?

The same individualist who asserts the impossibility of getting beyond himself to Wordsworth's intentions in "The Idiot Boy" or to the devine "Thou shalt not commit adultery" has a touching faith in the clarity and validity of the conclusions of modern science and technology. He is not bothered by the fact that science and technology are not cultural universals, but the result of a definite and limited historical tradition, not unlike our morals and religion, our literature and our art. In fact, we have more confirming evidence for the incest taboo and the text and meaning of Wordsworth's words than we do for the Theory of Relativity or the Neo-Darwinism Synthesis. If the tradition that supports all these cultural formations collapses, how long will any part of it survive?

How long can philosophy itself survive as an academic game, once it has been severed from its historical roots in reading and commenting on the canonical texts? Stephen Clark writes so well and so playfully, quoting a poet here, indulging an aesthetic or religious whim there, that the reader may lose sight of the profound seriousness of his long, three-volume essay. Most of us realize that our lives would be chaos if we could not remember what we had done in college, as young adults, even the day before yesterday.

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What future awaits a society whose intellectual leaders have forgotten their Hopkins and Kipling, their Plato and Plotinus? We can banish great thinkers from college curricula, but before long Kipling's Gods of the Copybook Headings with fire and sword will return.

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Speaking of JFK

by William Murchison

A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy
by Thomas C. Reeves
New York: The Free Press;
528 pp., $24.95

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That Presidents—chief magistrates of the nation—ought to possess solid character was taken for granted in the early Republic and for a long time thereafter. No longer is this the case. Character comes up for discussion mainly when someone like Gary Hart, caught with his pants down, throws the political odds-makers into a sudden tizzy. Even conservatives have relaxed their standards to accommodate, after the fashion of the new age, Presidents divorced from their first wives.

Twentieth-century Americans probably would acknowledge, if polled, the desirability of high standards in political leaders. On this basis, it isn't easy to explain the enthusiasm of an older, primmer America—and the continued wistfulness of those who remember him and of those who were unborn when he died—for John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who: conducted endless affairs and one-night (sometimes five-minute) stands his whole adult life, including his years in the White House; fornicated on a Mediterranean-anchored yacht while his wife wrestled with a difficult pregnancy; lied about his precarious health; lied about his war record; talked crudely and profanely as a matter of course; pretended to intellectual attainments and interests that weren't his at all; loved power more than principle; and so on.

Professor Thomas C. Reeves, of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, does not address in detail the reasons for our self-deception regarding JFK. Instead he gives us, learnedly and luminously, leads to pursue in the investigation. *A Question of Character* ascended to the *New York Times* best-seller list last summer, where it deserved to repose for some time. Thomas Reeves, a biographer of Joe McCarthy, was as taken thirty years ago with Kennedy as were many other people. He and his wife "greeted the election returns with loud celebration. It was a time for greatness in Washington." What happened to that greatness? Reeves writes, not without pain: "The real Kennedy—as opposed to the celebrated hero espoused by the Kennedy family, the media, and the Camelot School—lacked greatness in large part because he lacked the qualities inherent in good character." He wasn't nearly as good, or as smart, or as kind, or as much in control, as he looked from afar.

Reeves scrutinizes the dreary record. The "vigah" that JFK projected was induced in part by steroids and amphetamines. What Kennedy liked best was winning—at any cost. This made him, according to Reeves, "pragmatic to the point of amorality." Likewise the President "abused his high position for personal self-gratification." Various members of his staff were no better than procurers; when the President wanted a woman, which was often, a woman he got.

Yet what success he had at fooling some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time! (There are advantages to brief presidencies if one doesn't mind the leave-takings.) One reason for the Kennedy-mania of the 60's and since was the late President's charm, which was unmistakable. He had "It." Reading between Reeves' lines, one might speculate that JFK's very lack of earnestness helped him. He never knitted his handsome forehead tightly over matters of principle—not in the early years. (He was earnest only about winning.) Also, he had the press, which liked the President and wanted him to do well. Concerning Kennedy's omnivorous sexual appetites, and his extramarital affairs, George Reedy admits: "We knew. We all knew." "We" just didn't tell. There existed a kind of press-presidential collegiality that would have made all the difference to Richard Nixon, a different sort of man.

A Question of Character is no wanton mugging of the fallen President's memory. Reeves finds Kennedy maturing in office by the time of the Cuban missile crisis. The President genuinely dreaded nuclear warfare and eschewed recklessness in the face of Nikita Khrushchev's challenge to the Monroe Doctrine. "There was more to Kennedy's character by this time than the pursuit of power and pleasure that had shaped his career," Reeves writes. The presidency seems indeed to shape the man—at least to an extent. And Kennedy's nearly lifelong battle with physical debility likewise commands respect. He was frequently in agony from back pain and Addison's disease (a failure of the adrenal glands), but he soldiered on. Less admirable were the lies he told, and in which close associates connived, concerning his condition. The country, without knowing it, had elected a most unhealthy President, who might not have been able to serve out a second term.

Even Kennedyphobes may find poignance in the tale of a little boy visibly upset whenever his mother—as frequently happened—packed her bags for extended travel; craving love but finding instead, in his formidable father, only the push for success at any cost. As Reeves says, "The principle aim of life for the Kennedy youngsters—as defined by their father—was to achieve public success and prestige." One thing women seemed to love in JFK was his waif-like quality. He was in some sense a waif all his life—adrift

LIBERAL ARTS

DELUSION IN ACADEMIA

Kenneth Shaw, Chancellor of Syracuse University: "Reading articles or hearing debates on political correctness one could think that our campuses are dominated by narrowly focused individuals intent on remaking higher education in their own image. Alleged abuses, quotas, and radicalization of curricula are often used to convince others that there is an epidemic amongst us. Nothing could be further from the truth."

—*from the* Orange Peal, *Fall 1991*

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from close relationships, from deeply held principles, from, in Reeves' words, "a moral center, a reference point that went beyond self-aggrandizement."

No plaster saint was John F. Kennedy. The wonder maybe is that the nation fared no worse than it did under his stewardship. The Kennedy years, presided over by a waif with the sexual appetite of a goat, demonstrate inadvertently the great tensile strength of the Republic, and of the American people. We manage somehow to survive even our idols.

William Murchison is a columnist for the Dallas Morning News.

Hobson's Choices

by J.O. Tate

The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World
by Fred Hobson
Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press; 120 pp., $17.95

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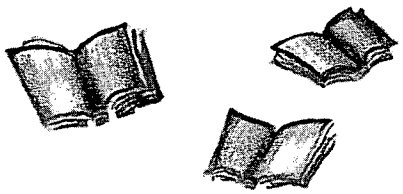
This slender volume — it embodies the 33rd of the Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures — is most welcome. The topic is a matter of broad interest, and the author knows his stuff. As scholar and critic, professor and editor, Fred Hobson is a respected authority, one to be alertly attended.

He doesn't let us down. He wants to show us where Southern fiction has gone since the 1960's — since the civil rights revolution, integration, the passing of the giants of the Southern Renascence, the bloat of fast money, cable television, Jimmy Carter, and other improvements in the quality of life. Let's see: Faulkner died in 1962, Flannery O'Connor in 1964, Allen Tate in 1979, Robert Penn Warren and Walker Percy only recently. Andrew Lytle and Eudora Welty survive, unique creators, ones who remind us that there was a time when Southern fictionists were the best in the country. That's not been the case for some while — a point that Fred Hobson lets go while he concentrates on the changes in fictional subject matter that reflect social adjustments, and on elements of continuity that can be identified. If the South is more than a geographical expression, then it may still have an identifiable literature.

Since a Coke-dimmed tide of popular culture — TV, rock, movies — has engulfed the South with the rest of the Republic, there must be a fictional accounting for the new environment. Hobson turns first to Bobbie Ann Mason's *In Country* and shows that this novel, though seeming to be about people without historical consciousness, is in its way very much concerned with history. He also shows that Mason herself represents a step down in social class from that of the best Southern writers of the past. Mason and others are a different class of Southerner, and represent an extension of the franchise of literature.

Lee Smith's *Oral History* receives a sophisticated treatment, one that shows the power of suggestion of that novel which examines a clash of cultures between the old and the new as well as between Tidewater and mountain Virginia. In commenting on Barry Hannah (a very different writer of a different South), Hobson calls him "perhaps the boldest, zaniest, and most outrageous writer of the contemporary South." He sees Hannah as continuing the traditions of Southwest Humor and Southern Gothic, as an heir of Faulkner and Wolfe, and as a meditator on history. Hannah has extended the world of Walker Percy's fiction — but he isn't alone in that.



Hobson classifies Richard Ford and Josephine Humphreys as writers in the tradition of Walker Percy. In what I think are his most brilliant pages, Hobson shows how the restless Ford remains a Southern writer in spite of his wanderings. His analysis of Ford's *The Sportswriter* decodes a series of puns, anagrams, allusions, and "sly and nearly hidden references," "cunning and slippery" evidence of the postmodern nature of that novel and of its relationship to Percy's *The Moviegoer* and other Southern fiction. Hobson finds Josephine Humphreys' *Dreams of Sleep* more straightforward to deal with, but no less valuable for that. The engagements with history and with personal authenticity show *Dreams of Sleep* to be a novel about the condition of the South as revealed by that remarkable city, Charleston.

Though Hobson finds continuity in contemporary Southern fiction — the humor, rewrites (often female) of *Huckleberry Finn* — he also sees a return of an old problem: the trap of local color. Two who have evaded that snare by finding a transcendence in the particular are, to him, Fred Chappell and Ernest Gaines. I have myself said much the same thing about Fred Chappell twice in print, and also about Ernest Gaines, at a panel discussion in 1984. Hobson uses *A Gathering of Old Men* to show Gaines as a literary heir of Faulkner; I advanced the argument that *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* is an outstanding Southern novel because of the intensity of its historical consciousness. I guess that shows that great minds think alike.

But not always. I wouldn't call Barry Hannah "offensive," nor would I ever use such an absurd pseudo-construction as "homophobic." Neither would I bow so often (if at all) in the direction of feminists, or take Alice Walker seriously. Hobson's remarks on Walker strongly imply that she should not be considered a Southern writer, since her idea of "community" is so completely befogged by obsessive ideology. Walker of course raises the problem also of *quality*, of judgment and priorities, and of political correctness as a literary phenomenon, particularly in a volume that explicitly repudiates Donald Davidson's politics while smoothly exploiting his insights.

Professor Hobson's casual reference to a Confederate cause that was "truly lost . . . truly unworthy and doomed" dismisses so much history, literature, and legend, that to me it contradicts the *idea*, not to mention the fact, of a distinctive Southern culture or cultures. Nevertheless, I have enjoyed reading this monograph on contemporary Southern fiction, and have learned from it. There can be no question that Fred Hobson has sorted out some of the phenomena of the present scene. I don't doubt that *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World* will be frequently consulted, and will influence the way Southern literature will be regarded, and even the way some mas-

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ter's essays and doctoral theses will be focused. Fred Hobson has chosen this forum and form to make sense of the cutting edge of Southern literature as it is being created, in a work that is mostly a pleasure and an edification.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

Fortress Mentalities

by Gregory McNamee

Military Brats
by Mary Edwards Wertsch
New York: Harmony Books;
452 pp., $20.00

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On the fringes of most American towns of more than fifty thousand inhabitants lies an odd no-man's-land. Rarely more than a few blocks long, this zone—identical in every region of the country—sports a complement of go-go bars, topless clubs, pawn shops, liquor stores, a video arcade or two, check-cashing joints, and barely disguised houses of prostitution. Bisecting this sector, always, is a broad avenue leading to a military base. The zone's denizens are uniformed young men and, lately, women, most barely out of their teens; its permanent residents occupy their time coaxing dollars from these soldiers' pockets. Resident and visitor view each other with the former suspiciousness of East and West Berliners. The attitude runs deep, and it has old roots. Civilians and soldiers nurture a reciprocal mistrust based on fear, often manifested, even in these heady days following the Persian Gulf adventure, in open contempt of the one for the other.

There is a third class of citizen, neither quite civilian nor military: the children of the warriors, known in the argot as "Army (or Navy, or Marine, or Air Force) brats." Their experiences are quite unlike those of their civilian counterparts. Like young people in our embattled inner cities, most never enjoy the carefree condition of childhood that is our supposed cultural norm. They are a band of gypsies millions strong, and until now their existence has been scarcely acknowledged.

Mary Edwards Wertsch's *Military Brats* is a long-needed corrective that goes a long way toward explaining to civilian society the demands it places not only on its soldiers but on their offspring, unbidden servants to the nation. Through that youthful bondage, we brats—my father, as did his father, was graduated from West Point and served for the better part of three decades as an Army officer—attain a culture like no other American minority's.

As Wertsch writes, we bear the long memory of uprootedness, separation, alienation. Almost without exception, we spent a part of our childhood without fathers, for they had been called away to war or other assignments where their families could not follow. We moved often—in my case, 18 times in my first 13 years—and in the process learned to form and abandon friendships instantly, to adopt to every sort of social situation, to be the new kid in school every few months. Most of us spent at least a few years overseas, while our fathers patrolled the forests of the Fulda Gap or the airspaces over northern Japan or the Caribbean.

On the positive side, Wertsch rightly notes, this migratory way of life lent us a quickness with languages, strong social skills, a tolerance for foreign ways, and, thanks to the multiethnic character of the Armed Services, a notable lack of racism. When billeted in civilian schools, we sought to distinguish ourselves by wandering to the margins: we equally dominated the honor roll and the ranks of juvenile delinquency, in either case expressing a darker aspect of our characters, a constant recognition of class hierarchy and need to set ourselves apart from the sons and daughters of the unindentured. Raised in the vast theater that is the military, where personae are donned and doffed as the situation demands, we became consummate actors.

These attitudes, Wertsch writes, carry over into adulthood. Few military brats have many close friends; in the words of Pat Conroy (the Marine brat who wrote *The Great Santini*, that talismanic novel of childhood inside the Fortress), "we put down not roots but vines." Even those who turn away from the military, as so many of my generation did as a result of Vietnam, continue to embody many of its traits: a cultivated seriousness, an obsessive attention to detail, a precision that breeds compulsive perfectionism, and an unconcealed dislike for the indecisive types who, it seems to us, fill the higher echelons of civilian society. We follow our parents' charge: *Me and my Mission against the world.* Many of us, as Wertsch points out, refuse to follow normal careers, valuing independence over the regimented order of our early years.

In preparing her book, Wertsch interviewed hundreds of military brats, men and women in roughly equal proportion; the best part of her book lies in the revealing anecdotes these veterans have to tell. Anyone who grew up in the military will recognize and easily identify with their stories of dislocation, of separateness, of yearning for some sort of stability; those who did not will likely finish reading *Military Brats* in a state approaching combat fatigue.

Wertsch is herself an Army brat, the daughter of a general whom she portrays as an alcoholic, abusive disciplinarian capable of only the rarest moments of tenderness. She tends, regrettably, to universalize from her dysfunctional family's experience, to make it emblematic of that of all warriors' children. In truth, while the rigors of living in a constant state of combat readiness—and in a caste with a rate of alcoholism three times that of civilian society—have left their mark, most of us managed to enter adulthood with few psychological scars, the happy products of loving and, given the circumstances, "normal" fathers and mothers. Wertsch is also distressingly reliant on now-outmoded varieties of Freudian psychoanalysis. She may be one of the few students of human personality to continue to take the notion of the Oedipal complex seriously.

For all that, *Military Brats* is a mirror for those who have as our ethic the warrior's motto, "Prepare yourself, for you are the only refuge you can rely on." Anyone who waved the yellow ribbon a year ago will find in Wertsch's study myriad reflections of the price of true patriotism. Her book merits a wide audience on both sides of the no-man's-land.

Gregory McNamee is a freelance writer in Tucson, Arizona.

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Letter From Cape Breton Island

by Jigs Gardner

The New Utopians

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Picture the scene: I am shoveling shavings into the team wagon, stooping over in my patched overalls and faded flannel shirt to scrape the barn floor clean, now and then climbing into the wagon to tread down the mounting heap. The young man who owns the new barn, the new tractor, the new hydraulic log loader, the new portable sawmill, the used planer (only ten thousand dollars) that made the shavings, the young man who owns all these sophisticated machines and who is something of a hippie, a belated celebrant of the 60's, nods at my horses in their tattered harness and says,

"Pretty soon we'll all be using 'em," adding as an explanation, "Greenhouse."

"Oh, baloney," I reply dismissively.

He looks at me reproachfully; I have failed to play my allotted part. He goes away to the other end of the barn to admire more of his expensive machinery while I finish cleaning up the shavings.

It is a scene rich in ironies, but what strikes me first is the young man's ignorance, something he shares with other environmentalists. They appear to know nothing, literally nothing about their situation in this material world, where all of us are wholly dependent, physically and mentally, on an unfathomably complex, pervasive structure composed of things and thoughts, matter and spirit, called Civilization, as old as the first tool-using man, as new as a space station—or a hydraulic log loader. As individuals we choose or reject bits and pieces of that structure (most of it becomes part of our lives without our conscious knowledge), but in the history of the species such choices are meaninglessly trivial. Human beings create, maintain, and add to the structure, and it sustains and carries forward the life of the group. It is not possible for us, as a group or a generation, to dismantle a significant portion of it without suddenly or drastically impoverishing our lives. Quite innocent of all such knowledge, innocent even of the profound and incredible implications of what he is saying, the young man fatuously predicts the resurgence of horse power.

The obvious ironies—that an affluent user of sophisticated machinery should condescend to remark my use of horses as a prophetic gesture; that I, to all appearances a rare specimen of the nearly extinct race of hippie-homesteaders, should be granted environmental approval by a veritable apotheosis of inappropriate technology—are not the cream of the jest by any means. There is a deeper irony: my wife and I, who have been living the much-touted "simple life" (with a vengeance) for 30 years, who own no motor vehicles at all, are ardent champions of everything environmentalists deplore—we preach the virtues of capitalism, of technology, of nuclear power, and so on. Our life has taught us by the kind of hard experience unknown to any environmentalist the importance of the forces of development in the modern world. When you cut 25 cords of firewood by hand, you appreciate a chain saw; when a cow is down with milk fever, you are thankful for modern medical research; when you own woodland, the knowledge of contemporary forestry is a boon. And we know that behind those specific things is the structure of our civilization, that neither the saw nor the medicine nor the forestry is an isolated entity, that they are fruits of human reason and imagination impelled and energized by a dynamic civilization.

We, too, were once environmentalists, but knowledge cured us—with an assist from the "simple life."

The specific incident grew out of a conflict over the use of herbicides in the forests on Cape Breton Island (where we live) in Nova Scotia. We had always supported the island environmentalist group in its continuing battles with the local pulp mill over forestry practices, but on this occasion I noticed, in one of the group's mailings, the citation of a study that had long been discredited. I became uneasy. What did I *really* know about the herbicide? About forestry? Beyond the glib slogans of the group, what did I *know*? That realization was the beginning of the end of my environmentalism, a point of view that is so stupid and so irrational that it can only thrive in a closed atmosphere of cocksure ignorance.

So I began searching for knowledge, and that finally led me to the pulp company's forest ranger for our district. How many books and scientific articles Mike brought me to study over the next year, how many miles of highway and dirt road and logging trails I have traveled in his company, I cannot guess, but it has all added up to a lot of knowledge, even if I have not wholly assimilated all of it. Because it was hard—scientific, technical material—and though I have a couple of degrees and was even a "perfesser" once, my field was literature. As I thought about the kind of knowledge Mike had, and the kind I had, I began to see a hitherto unobserved distinction: we environmentalists, mostly 60's people, belong to a group, greatly expanded in the increasingly affluent times since the end of World War II, composed of middle-class and upper-middle-class people, who have spent more and more of our time in school, usually studying the humanities or the social sciences and related subjects. At one time, a liberal arts education was a discipline of mind, a training in mental rigor and clarity, but it has steadily deteriorated over the last forty years until it is now too often little more than a prolonged exposure to fashionable attitudes. Mike the forest ranger, however, came out of the working-class-technician tradition; he had a good high school education plus a one-year course in Forestry School. Furthermore, there has been a parallel divergence in the fields of technical and liberal arts education: knowledge in practical areas has burgeoned; to understand the work of forestry today

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requires a mastery of technical detail almost unimaginable forty years ago. As a liberal arts education has become ever more nebulous, forestry (or agriculture or mining, or any of a number of subjects) studies have become more technical, complex, and rigorous. It is not surprising, then, that environmentalists should have very simpleminded notions about how to manage endeavors like forestry, nor is it remarkable that middle-class people in general, those who do not do the technical work of the world, should be taken in so easily by the crazy claims of environmentalists.

This knowledge of Mike's was a revelation to me, and I stress it here because I do not think it is widely recognized; I do not think we realize the degree of knowledge and competence that the farmer, the forester, the fisherman, et al., in their millions must have for society to function as smoothly as it does. We are all familiar with the form of knowledge that lies behind this, theoretical science. We know that in certain highly complex affairs we require expert guidance from men and women who have worked long and hard to acquire and develop knowledge about matter that is so abstruse and abstract that it must be translated for us. We value science, and despite some ambivalence, we trust scientists. But we don't know enough, we don't appreciate enough, the knowledge of the men and women who do the work of the world.

I have laid so much emphasis on the issue of knowledge because when I saw how it functioned in forestry, I remembered an obvious truth that had been suppressed, even denied during my environmentalist years: all civilization is ultimately based on our control and manipulation of nature. The story of mankind's ascent from the cave can be told in terms of that growing mastery. It is a truth just as obvious that nature is so vast and so complex that whatever control we achieve is always partial, feeble, tenuous. That control grows out of knowledge, most broadly conceived, and not confined to knowledge, scientific or technical, that bears directly on the physical world. Wishing always to improve our lives, to make them longer and healthier and freer, less burdened by labor, even wiser, we must ever work for the knowledge that will extend our control over nature. "Control," however, is not quite the right word. The more we study crops and their pests, for instance, the more refined our methods become for promoting the crops and diminishing the pests: we breed stronger, resistant crops; we learn how to take advantage of weather, of the enemies of pests, of the biology of the pests themselves; our intervention becomes more selective and effective. We may call that control, but it should be more precisely defined as increased knowledge enabling us to work more intelligently *with* nature. Perhaps the best way to put it is to say that in struggling against entropy, against the natural tendency to let things slide, in struggling for a more orderly, more productive world, we strive against nature, but in the tactics, the details of how we go about it, we can only work with nature.

When environmentalists demand that we remake our societies "in harmony with nature," they reveal their own ignorance: everything we do is in harmony with nature—how could it be otherwise? *What they want is the abandonment of sophisticated knowledge in favor of primitive forms.*

People have short memories. We easily forget what life was like in the recent past, just as we quickly discount the material advances made in our own day. I live on an island where the principal highways were not paved until the 1950's and 60's, where phones and electricity were not ubiquitous until thirty years ago, where until World War II most of the rural people worked from before dawn until after dark to gain a poor living from thin soil in a harsh climate. That may sound like paradise to environmentalists, but it tells me a different story: that within the memory of living inhabitants people have looked on helplessly while men bled to death in hay fields, while women died in lonely farmhouses from puerperal fever, and that where life is hard now, a short time ago it was much much harder.

Our lives are always constrained. We are nature's creatures, after all, and cannot escape biology. But insofar as mankind has knowledge, and thus a measure of power over the natural world, to that degree is our constraint eased. Living on this island, where the knowledge and the power came late, I have seen what that means.

A couple of simple, obvious, basic, but neglected truths: life means change and development, the incessant emergence of problems (and opportunities) that are solved (and seized) and recreated in new forms in the press of further change. Once we threw our garbage in the back of the cave, then we heaved it into the river, later we hauled it to the town dump, and today we burn it to generate electricity. But our choices and expectations are mainly determined by our collective wealth; in a nation where three square meals is a luxury, people will not be concerned about elaborate garbage disposal systems. The wealth created in the West since the end of World War II has made us care about clean air and water, and it has also given us the means to achieve such desires. This cannot be overstressed. Knowledge, wealth, and improved practices go hand in hand. *Real* environmentalism, the actual improvements in the environment, are solely due to our growing affluence, especially in the last forty-five years. We may call this rational environmentalism: the wish for measures to protect or develop environmental amenities that promise tangible benefits at a reasonable cost.

The environmental movement, however, believes that wealth is the problem, not the solution. Greens take great solemn delight in telling us that the only way we can save our "injured planet" in the short time left to us is by lowering consumption, dismantling modern industry, curbing if not eliminating capitalism, and slowing technological development. In other words, it is only by *reversing* the flow of knowledge and development, it is only by becoming *poorer* that we can live environmentally pure lives. Astoundingly stupid as this is, it is typical of Greenism in all its aspects. For instance, why all the fuss about recycling? It only has a point when it is commercially viable. There is, and always has been, a market for various used materials, but beyond that recycling is counterproductive because it creates costs for no benefits. Every idiot proclaims that he is saving trees by using recycled paper—what for? Trees will only die if they're not harvested, and contrary to the Green myths, the total forest inventory in the United States has been

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growing substantially since 1920. We are not running out of wood at all. That's the essence of Greenism: absurd "solutions" for nonexistent problems. Global warming, greenhouse effect, ozone layer depletion—they're all frauds.

Greenism is, in fact, the latest manifestation of a utopian, Manichaean world view fueled by hatred of modern bourgeois Western civilization. Unable to muster the maturity to recognize the impersonal forces of change, these fanatics see plots everywhere: the forces of light are locked in desperate struggle with the forces of darkness, crises impend, apocalyptic thunderheads tower on lurid horizons, and simpleminded but immensely appealing melodramas are enacted again and again on the wide screen of the cooperative media.

A persistent theme in Green literature—"where every prospect pleases and only man is vile"—is misanthropy, another aspect of utopianism, always contemptuous of human beings as they are. Unwilling to believe in the intelligence, ingenuity, and imagination of other people, their favorite cause is population control. Like all zealots, they are strongly urged to power, and they contemplate coercion and repression, pushing recalcitrant citizens around, with obvious satisfaction. So any sensible solutions to real environmental problems are vehemently rejected; their ideas must triumph and they must be in power to enforce them. There can be no compromise with the forces of darkness.

Meanwhile, the "wounded" planet, unscathed, rolls on its diurnal course, oblivious to the hysterical delusions frenziedly trumpeted on its surface.

Jigs Gardner writes from Orangedale, Nova Scotia.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Space Invaders: Part II

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Last spring, my friend Dick, a history professor here, was riding in a Long Island airport limousine when it stopped to pick up another passenger, an elderly lady burdened with luggage and confronted by a garden gate that wouldn't open. After watching her struggle for a while, Dick got out and gave her a hand. When they were settled in the car the lady thanked him. The driver (who had watched everything from behind the wheel) said, "He's from the South."

I find that a delicious story, not least because Dick is a Midwesterner who came to North Carolina via Harvard and Oxford, and he's about as Southern as—oh, say as T.S. Eliot. That story suggests how careful we should be about generalizing, but it also tells us that, despite all the incursions of northern folks and northern ways, people still think Southern manners are different.

And of course they are different. Just the other day, a student was telling me about her new neighbors, a Jewish couple from Los Angeles, who were mightily offended when a new acquaintance asked them casually where they go to church. In the South, this is still a standard gambit, no offense intended, just a way of figuring out who you're dealing with. "We're Jewish" is a perfectly satisfactory response. But apparently Angelenos feel it's none of our business.

But, you know, Californians have their own intrusive ways. Last year, for instance, when we were living out yonder, people often asked what I do for exercise. Now I find *that* question offensive. For starters, it's embarrassing: coughing a lot is about the extent of my exercise program these days. Besides, I tend to agree with Robert Frost:

> After babyhood self-
> improvement becomes a
> private matter. Physical mental
> or moral, please attend to it
> where I cant see you if you care
> to avoid my disgust.

(That's the old New Englander's own punctuation, or lack of it.)

Anyway, Southern manners really are still different, and Southerners usually think they're *better*, too. Not everyone disagrees. But, as I wrote last month, some northerners dislike about Southerners the very same things others admire, and that even goes for Southern courtesy and friendliness.

Sometimes the problem is just that Yankees aren't used to it. A student from Philadelphia told our campus paper that when he first came to North Carolina, "everybody was almost too friendly to me. I didn't know how to react to it." Another northern student agreed: "It ain't easy for a boy from the Bronx to be yessired by cops and cashiers and smiled at by total strangers." This lad was especially nonplussed by a convenience store clerk who "thanked me with an earnestness that would have been excessive if I had offered to donate a kidney to her sickly grandmother."

Most immigrants come to like this sort of thing, in time. But a few newcomers observe that manners disguise Southerners' real feelings. (That would sound familiar to the Japanese, of course. They're polite, too, and they get called "inscrutable.") "Southerners are more apt to say cordial greetings to

LIBERAL ARTS

CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT?

David M. Steading, who is serving a 30-month sentence in an Illinois prison for drug possession, claims that secondhand smoke violates his constitutional rights. In 1989, Steading filed a class-action lawsuit seeking millions of dollars in damages and requiring the establishment of smoking and non-smoking areas in prisons. As the *Chicago Tribune* reported last summer, a U.S. District Court judge dismissed the lawsuit and a federal appeals court agreed, for the Illinois prison system is exempt from the law that requires businesses to designate smoking areas.

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each other, but that's about all," a kid from Illinois told the paper. "It's a very superficial friendliness."

Some northerners who have figured this out like it anyway. A graduate art student from Boston observed that Southerners' greater friendliness "works two ways." "Some of them are friendly," he said, "and some of them are but really aren't. It's just sort of a politeness." But, he added, "that's fine because it makes things easier anyway."

A Massachusetts businessman, recalling the years he spent in the South, agreed. "A lot of northerners thought the Southerners' friendliness was phony—saccharine, sugar-coated," he said. "But I didn't care. I'd rather people be nice to me than not nice. If you're going to be the new person in town, the South is a good place to land."

But a few transplants seem to be really annoyed by what they see as our lack of integrity. A department-store executive relocated to Georgia from Ohio complained that Southern graciousness "does not come across as politeness but insincerity." And a woman from Philadelphia told a North Carolina journalist, "It's all epitomized by the neo-Southern Bitch. She dresses so damned cute. Who's she think she's fooling? It's all just fluff, and flirt, and manipulation." The journalist, a Southerner, commented that there was "definitely no fluff" to this woman. "She would not flirt or manipulate: say the wrong thing, and she'd simply rip your ears off."

But she may just have resented the response of northern *men* to "fluff, flirt, and manipulation." Most like it. A Boston boy, for instance, said that Southern coeds are "a lot more refreshing. . . . Down here they have a sweeter image and I like that." A graduate student from St. Louis added that Southern college women "don't come on as hard. They're much less aggressive in their relationships."

By and large, northern women tend to like the manners and style of Southern men, too. A pharmacy student from New Jersey told the student paper that "Southern guys are more polite and they're more apt to do things like hold open doors. I enjoy it. I'm liberated but I'm not going to get pi--ed off if some guy holds the door open for me." A student from Pennsylvania agreed, adding, "They don't seem to forget that you're a woman, and that's nice." (Well, maybe, but a little later the same woman was saying that "men are much more chauvinistic in the South.")

Outside the South, though, Southern manners can get you in trouble. Last year I was talking to a couple of friends on a corner at DuPont Circle, in Washington, when a sorry-looking black wino edged up to us and stood there, not saying a word. My friends, city boys, ignored him. I tried to, but finally I just couldn't stand pretending that the guy simply . . . *wasn't there*, so I made eye contact, knowing perfectly well that it was a mistake.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but can you help a homeless individual?" (In D.C. even the bums use the approved euphemisms.)

Well, the "excuse me, sir" did it. This guy's mama had raised him right. His manners (and mine) scored him my pocket change.

He and I understood each other perfectly well, but more often problems arise because of misunderstanding. In *Southern Ladies and Gentlemen*, for instance, Florence King writes about the trials of a Southern woman in New York:

> When you rattle off a standard Southern thank-you—"Oh, you're just so nice, I don't know what I'd *do* without you!" the Northern man *believes you*! He believes you so much that he follows you home.

I know what she means. I've actually had a similar experience. On an international flight a couple of years ago, I'd been talking with a cute little Japanese-American flight attendant, and was startled to be asked for my phone number. Now, all I'd done was *chat* (honest). I didn't want to be rude, but I'm happily married, so I just made up a number.

Besides, he wasn't my type—which is female, for starters. (Sorry. Couldn't resist telling it that way.)

Anyway, these days more and more Southerners have to deal with non-Southerners, and being misunderstood may in time make us as curt, abrupt, and no-nonsense as New Yorkers.

But that would be a shame. Our manners have served us well, and not just by making everyday dealings with strangers more pleasant. As W.J. Cash recognized fifty years ago, in *The Mind of the South*, manners are one reason the "yoke" of class has "weighed but lightly" in these parts.

More about this next month.

John Shelton Reed will be interviewed on the public radio program "Soundings" the week of January 12.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Scouting and Sin

by William Grigg

The Case Against the Boy Scouts

The Boy Scouts of America have recently been accused of sins against Democracy, in the form of discrimination against atheists, homosexuals, and women. Four recent lawsuits have challenged the organizational prerogatives of the Scouts. The families of nine-year-old twins Michael and William Randall of Anaheim, California, and eight-year-old Mark Welsh of Chicago are suing to get their youngsters admitted as Cub Scouts without the boys having professed a belief in a Supreme Being. In Los Angeles, the case arising from the 1980 dismissal of Tom Curran, a homosexual, from his position as Scoutmaster, remains active. Last July a contingent from the militant group "Queer Nation" besieged a Scout office in San Francisco in an attempt to register as Scoutmasters. Queer Nation spokesman Stephen Morgan declared, "The Boy Scouts are in need of the positive influence of gay role models."

Margo Mankes, an eight-year-old Florida girl who had been accepted as an informal member of a Cub Scout pack, has been ordered out by a regional Scout Council. Miss Mankes responded by going to Circuit Court to plead for a chance to attend Scout camp. Her cause made good copy and attracted the services of attorney Mark Rubin. Mankes and Rubin, along with Curran, appeared on CNN's *Larry King Live* last July 10—Curran to celebrate the fact that a California court has declared the Boy Scouts to be a public entity and thus liable to civil rights laws, Rubin to deploy potted platitudes about "justice" and "equality," and Mankes to serve as a sympathetic prop.

The contours of this controversy are wearily familiar to students of the political-correctness plague. Not all commentators, however, see this simple truth. Michael Hinds of the *New York Times* insists, "This is not a dispute over political correctness. The dissidents are not trying to alter the program of skills and homey virtues that the Scouts have taught to four generations of American boys. Rather, they simply want to join the organization, and the Scouts do not want them."

Hinds is, at best, disingenuous. Compelling the Scouts to modify their admission and membership policies would result in the death of the organization through the redefinition of its mission. Forcing the Scouts into gender "integration" would destroy the organization's distinctiveness, and make the Girl Scouts redundant. (Significantly, on the *Larry King* show Miss Mankes said that she would be satisfied if the Girl Scouts would make some changes in their selection of activities. Rubin blanched at this unprovoked display of reasonableness on the part of his client.) Compelling the Scouts to hire homosexual Scoutmasters would exacerbate the problem the organization has with parents and sponsors worried about child abuse. Moreover, making the Scouts abandon their religious requirement (this has been a pet project of the American Atheists for many years) would invalidate a founding tenet of the organization.

Article IX of the Scout bylaws asserts, "The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God." This obligation is codified in the Scout Oath and the Scout Law, which are dutifully recited at every Scout meeting. The Scouts are scrupulously nonsectarian in applying the religious requirement: clause three of Article IX maintains that "In no case where a unit is connected with a Church or other distinctively religious organization shall members of other denominations or faiths be required, because of their membership in the unit, to take part in or observe a religious ceremony distinctly peculiar to that organization or church."

An atheist Scout would thus be excused from any religious functions incidental to his membership in a unit—but he couldn't avoid the Scout Oath. Recognition of a Scout's duty to God is fundamental to the mission of Scouting. It is true, as Mr. Hinds says, that dissidents aren't trying to "alter the program" of Scouting. Their objective is more comprehensive—the transformation of Scouting into a completely secular entity.

Mark Welsh, the young atheist from Chicago, is a second-generation malcontent. His father, Elliot Welsh, declared himself a Conscientious Objector in 1970 on "ethical" rather than religious grounds. The Supreme Court found in favor of Welsh, thereby imposing a rather drastic reform upon the military. It is difficult to believe that Mark Welsh is acting on his own initiative; it is more likely that his father, much like insufferable Little League parents who use their child athletes as proxies, has used his son as a political surrogate.

In addition to the courts, the Scouts are vulnerable to two avenues of attack. The first runs through Congress. Section VIII of the 1915 act that incorporated the Scouts requires the organization to "make and transmit to Congress a report of its proceedings" every year on or before April 1. Not many in Congress are likely to discern any political advantage in beating up on Scouting, but the idea of making

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the Scouts more "inclusive" has taken hold among the "chattering classes." The United Way of America represents a second vulnerability to the Scouts. Donations from the United Way constitute approximately 25 percent of the organization's annual budget. The United Way advises its local chapters not to contribute to organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin. The United Way chapter in DeKalb County, Illinois, cited unspecified discrimination in its decision to deny funding to the local Scout council. The national United Way organization has neither condemned nor commended the action of the DeKalb chapter and has refused to comment about the worthiness of the Scouts for future contributions until present and pending litigation is settled. If any of the current discrimination suits are resolved against the Scouts, they could confront the loss of United Way funds.

The United Way has already extracted a significant concession from the Scouts. In early August came an announcement that an adjunct program to Scouting entitled "Learning for Life" would be offered in public schools. The Scouts insisted that the program had been in development for quite a while, and that its original purpose was to provide specialized instruction for inner-city youth. However, the program has been opened to atheists, homosexuals, and young women; this decision has apparently resolved a dispute over a nine thousand dollar United Way grant that had been withheld because of "discrimination."

Predictably, this concession appears to be begetting demands for further appeasement. The Bay Area branch of United Way, which had held up the grant, has pronounced that the new program represents a good "first step." Other critics of the Scouts are even less satisfied with the new arrangement. Lynn Hect Schafran of the NOW Legal Defense Fund complains that by including girls in the "Learning for Life" program, "The Boy Scouts are lumping girls together with society's most marginalized citizens into a club that could be called 'Pariahs Unlimited.'" The liberal refrain was not surprising: the alternative program is improper, because "separate is inherently unconstitutional."

But the United Way presents just one horn of Scouting's financial dilemma. The other horn comes in the form of a threat from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Roman Catholic Church. These two denominations sustain over one quarter of all Scout troops in America. They have announced their intention to withdraw their support from the Boy Scouts of America if the organization changes its policy regarding homosexual Scoutmasters.

The Mormon Church organized the first American Scouting Council in 1913. If the Church decided to withdraw from the national Scouting body, it would be in a good position to inaugurate an independent organization. In Utah, where the Church has its base, between 95 and 98 percent of all Scouts are Mormon. The four Utah Scout Councils receive a negligible amount from the United Way; one of them, the Utah National Parks Council, stopped receiving United Way funds in 1985. The financial assets of the Mormon Church probably outstrip those of any other American denomination. If the Mormons, Catholics, and other religious traditionalists left Scouting, they could conceivably take Scouting with them.

"Progressives" in Utah, perhaps sensing this possibility, have taken up the cudgels against both the Scouts and the Mormon Church. In a *Salt Lake Tribune* story published on June 26, Chris Allen, director of the Utah chapter of the American Atheists (Madalyn O'Hair's organization), condemned the Scouts for "bigotry" against atheists, homosexuals, and girls. "We don't like the idea of their teaching their standards in the public schools. I'm sure you could talk to the Aryan Nations and the KKK and they could talk of their high moral values." Allen described the influence of the Mormon and Roman Catholic churches as a conspiracy to impose a "Civil Religion" upon America through Scouting, and insisted that the use of Scouting to promote religious values is "un-American" and a violation of the principle of the separation of church and state.

The American Atheists use their literature and gatherings to propagate hatred for religion and religious people (albeit with admirable evenhandedness among faiths and denominations); accordingly, the group is in a poor position to complain about bigotry. One might dismiss Allen's fulminations as the grumbling of a marginalized crank, but four days after the interview appeared the *Tribune*—Utah's second largest daily—gentrified Allen's opinions in a house editorial.

The *Tribune* editorial was headlined, "Boy Scouts should join America in welcoming greater Diversity." The piece was a sanitized, "compassionate" retread of Allen's charge of "un-Americanism." It obliquely condemned the Mormon and Catholic churches for threatening to withdraw from Scouting and then urged local chapters of the United Way to withdraw financial support from Scouting, averring that their funds "might be better spent on organizations that benefit a broader spectrum of the American population." (Atheists, by the most generous reckoning, comprise about 7 percent of the population, homosexuals less than 5 percent. Presumably these groups overlap. Girls have a Scouting program of their own. Clearly the Boy Scouts, as presently constituted, are representative of the "broad spectrum" of American society.) The *Tribune* cheerfully anticipates the day when "Scout affiliation with the public schools . . . might open the door to government intervention in membership policy." State intervention would liberate the Scouts from the "hidebound tradition" that keeps the organization "exclusively male and predominantly Christian." Once broken to the state's saddle, the Scouts would take their place among the enlightened "government, business, social, and civic organizations . . . that welcome, rather than deny, diversity."

There are those of us who maintain that it is perversity, rather than diversity, that the Scouts reject. Gently, but insistently, the *Tribune* scolded us: "The ban on homosexual scoutmasters is based upon the unfair generalization that all homosexuals pose a threat to the privacy and healthy sexual development of youngsters. Not all homosexuals are pedophiles or inclined to 'recruit' boys to their ranks." Actually, the ban is based upon two eminently sensible considerations. The first is the moral judgment that homosexuality is wrong and depraved. The second con-

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sideration is this: although "not all" homosexuals are predatory, the Boy Scouts cannot afford to play sodomy roulette.

Over the past five years the Scouts, who receive annual revenues of about ninety million dollars, have been ordered to pay approximately fifteen million dollars in damages resulting from sexual abuse complaints. About sixty cases of abuse are reported each year, in spite of the rigorous screening to which the Scouts submit applicants for leadership posts. Imagine the litigation explosion that could result if representatives of the Queer Nation (or the North American Man-Boy Love Association), eager to teach youngsters about the "positive aspects" of homosexuality, were given stewardship over Scout units.

There are signs that some Scouts have already been reeducated. Paul Hudson, an 18-year-old Scout, has successfully demanded that Scout units in the South excise the Confederate flag from its insignias and refrain from displaying it during Scout gatherings. Hudson, a young white man who claims Southern ancestry reaching back three centuries, explains that he believes the use of the Confederate flag may discourage black youths from participating in Scouting. "The [number of times] the Confederate flag is shown during [Scouting] events is very prominent," complains Hudson. "No one's wearing white hoods on their heads, but it almost looks like a resegregation rally or something."

It remains unclear whether those Scouting units from the several states whose state flags incorporate the Confederate flag will have to accommodate Hudson's demands.

William Grigg is a columnist for the Daily Herald *in Provo, Utah.*

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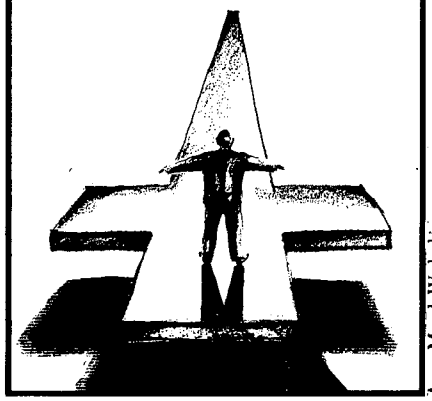

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Running the Psychosocial Gauntlet

by Anne Marie Morgan

The Bureaucracy of Getting Married

To prepare couples for the sacrament and life of matrimony, Roman Catholic canon prescribes sensible requirements for "Pastoral Care and What Must Precede Celebration of Marriage." According to Canon 1063, "Pastors of souls are obliged to see to it that their own ecclesiastical community furnishes the Christian faithful assistance so that the matrimonial state is maintained in a Christian spirit and makes progress toward perfection. This assistance is especially to be furnished through: Preaching . . . personal preparation . . . a fruitful liturgical celebration of marriage . . . assistance furnished to those already married." And Canon 1064, "It is up to the local ordinary to make provisions that such assistance is duly organized."

Throughout the ages, couples have been accustomed to complying with universal theological guidelines as a condition for the sacrament of marriage within the Church. A recommended course of religious study and spiritual counseling with a priest have been the norm in most dioceses for many years. But modern "provisions" made by local ordinaries in many dioceses throughout the United States are a far cry from what the historic Church had in mind for constructive premarital preparation. In these dioceses, "preaching" and "personal preparation" have been transmogrified into a strange hybrid of psychological testing, marriage counseling based on quantified, computerized test scores, and compulsory weekend retreats.

In some parishes, priests unfamiliar to the engaged couples dispense counseling, preaching deteriorates into psychobabble, and sociology displaces theology. Intended couples discover to their amazement that they must shoulder an unwelcome, very modern burden: running a gauntlet of psychosocial prerequisites as a *condition* for marriage within the Church.

The most common and novel prerequisite for marriage today is personality or compatibility testing, conducted during a couple's six- to nine-month engagement waiting period. Parishes choose from a variety of investigative devices with names such as "Pre-Marriage Inventory," "Prenuptial Investigation," or "Focus Test." The detailed exams consist of a battery of declaratory statements, with which the examinees agree or disagree by fill-in-the-dots — or a series of interrogatory statements, to which they must give written answers. Each person must take the test separately, and no consultation between the pair is permitted. If the couple refuses to take the inventory or exam, then they are refused marriage within the Church — unless they can find a diocese that does not require testing.

The results are tallied, as one local church official explained, "by an objective machine somewhere." Usually a graph is compiled showing the percentage of agreement between the couple on each inventory category. If most of the categories show indicators of high agreement — between the 85 to 100 percent marks — then the pair is considered to be "compatible." After the results are compiled, the priest discusses them at length with the betrothed.

Many of the broad categories listed in the inventories read like something out of a college freshman Psychology 101 textbook: role adjustment, personal adjustment, interpersonal communication, interests and activities, marriage

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readiness, sexuality, and "critical" items. (The last item is a compendium of the "best" questions flushed out of all the categories—and a low score in this section is considered a dire foreshadowing.)

Here is a sampling of the inventory statements and questions to which the couple is traditionally asked to respond "agree," "disagree," or "somewhat":

I am uncomfortable when I am around some of my future in-laws.

We are comfortable with our choice's [sic] of political parties.

I am feeling great pressure from someone about our wedding plans.

My future husband/wife is too dependent on his/her parents.

I am sometimes at a loss to know what to do about my future husband's/wife's moodiness.

My family and the family of my future husband/wife have quite different socioeconomic standards.

I am worried that we do not have enough insurance.

One of us always has to be right.

I am often bothered by the belittling remarks my future husband/wife makes about me.

We have made plans about where we will live after marriage.

I am at the right age to get married.

I am sure that I will never doubt my love for my future husband/wife.

Pregnancy has affected our marriage plans.

One or both of us feels some concern about educational background causing problems between us.

At times, I am disturbed about my future husband's/wife's sense of humor.

Often I am displeased with the appearance of my future husband/wife.

I am worried about the use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs between us.

I worry that the physical/mental health of one or both of us will cause problems between us.

I have grown up with good feelings about sex.

A good way to work out problems between us will be to have sexual intercourse.

Homosexual tendencies in either one of us has [sic] me worried.

I am fearful that I might be sexually impotent/frigid.

Sex is something I very much want.

I am not afraid to accept the duties of a parent.

We are in agreement with each other about how many children we would like to have.

Do you practice your religion faithfully?

Is any person or circumstance forcing you to enter this marriage against your will? (If answer is yes, consult the Chancery.)

Have you ever been treated in a hospital or by a doctor for mental or nervous illness?

Some couples oppose such testing prerequisites on philosophical grounds: as a further intrusion of positivistic, behavioral scientism into the Church. These couples would have refused to take the test on principle had they been permitted marriage within the Church without it. They resent the compulsory aspect of required participation in psychosocial exercises. "If we had wanted to go to a psychologist, we would have gone to a psychologist," lamented one newly married couple. They added, "What we wanted from pastoral counseling is what a social worker can't give—spiritual nurture and guidance."

Other test-takers report practical reasons for disliking the requirement. They eschew its privacy-invading character. Problems they may want to discuss or confess privately with a priest are exposed to open view, recorded for posterity, and evaluated by some "objective" bean-counter somewhere. Many couples maintain that there is room for disagreement and personal growth on many questions, and that divergent scores do not mean grounds for "incompatibility." Moreover, they argue, such questions are open to disparate interpretations. For example, one couple answered very differently to the statement, "Pregnancy has affected our marriage plans." The groom replied affirmatively, since his sister-in-law was pregnant and had wanted to be in the wedding; the bride, thinking the declaration implied a shotgun wedding, responded in the negative. The couple received a low score on compatibility, and their priest strongly advised against marriage.

"People are not predictable machines. Charts, graphs, and averages are not good predictors of a healthy marriage," commented the couple. "One 'perfect match' we know scored high on compatibility and are now divorced. Conversely, we scored terribly on compatibility but we are very happily married."

In some parishes, the priest merely uses the inventories as a launching pad for fruitful discussions with the betrothed pair, and some couples report finding the questions humorous. But for other couples, the inventories are no laughing matter. In some instances, priests have refused to marry couples who otherwise met universal theological guidelines but scored "poorly" on com-

LIBERAL ARTS

SPLATTER-PROOF FOOD

When inmates at the Louisiana State Penitentiary throw food, it isn't splattering all over the prison guards. As the *Chicago Tribune* reported last summer, state officials submitted a plan last July to mix the ingredients of a meal into a food loaf. Unlike wet food, this creation would bounce off security guards, who are frequently the targets of such attacks. Keith Nordyke, an attorney representing the inmates in a lawsuit over prison conditions, endorsed the plan after he tasted a spaghetti food loaf. "It wasn't good to look at, but it wasn't bad to eat."

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patibility. "I was surprised and stunned," said one bride-to-be who ultimately was not. "When we took the tests, I never anticipated what would happen. About a week after my fiancé and I took the tests, the priest brought in our scores. Based on our scores, he refused to marry us. We had already made wedding plans, and we called them off because we didn't want to marry outside of the Church."

Cheat sheets, anyone?

Finally, some couples report that they longed to have closer relationships with their priests so that their pastor could teach and counsel them with personal knowledge of their weaknesses and strengths. Instead, what sometimes occurred was that counseling was dispensed based on social and scientific data by priests whom the couples had never met. Modern methodology had replaced intimate pastoral conversation and fellowship.

Once the hopefully-still-engaged couples pass the requisite tests, they then must agree to meet with married couples for mandatory classes, counseling sessions, or a weekend retreat. Since the married "facilitators" are volunteers, the experiences vary. Many couples find that the "encounters" are very valuable, while others discover that they must brave yet another ordeal.

The idea behind the retreat is an appealing one. The prospective bride and groom can escape from the exigencies of modern life—from the television, the newspapers, the telephone—to a refuge where they can focus on each other and on marriage, learn from a priest and experienced married couples, and reflect on spiritual things. Yet a typical program consists of multiple group sharing sessions. The married leaders make presentations, assign essay questions to the engaged couples, and then sequester each man and woman in separate rooms for the writing of the essays. After 30 to 45 minutes, as one couple described it, a cowbell would be rung to signal the end of the writing session. The couples are then reunited and allowed 30 minutes to discuss their answers in private, after which the cowbell would again be rung and the couples would be herded back to the group; this lecturing, writing, discussing, herding, and dispersing traditionally lasts for three days. Occasionally, the focus of the program becomes obscured. Instead of escaping from modern life, modernity invades again—in the form of quasi-encounter group discussions or psychological and sociological theorizing about common concerns.

One engaged couple attending a retreat was surprised when, in the midst of conducting the sessions, the leaders broke down crying while telling their personal stories:

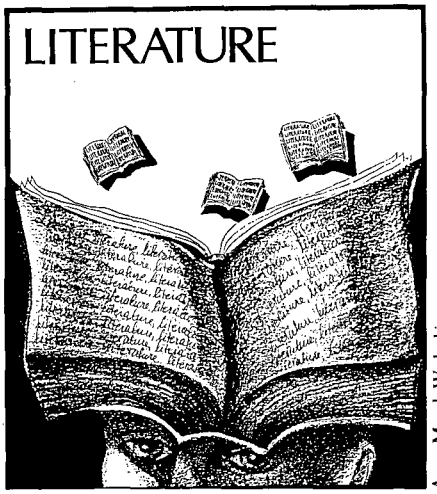
> I think everyone sympathized with the grief or joy the leaders were feeling, but . . . particularly when it got to the sixth time, we could not help but wonder whether such occurrences were not much more cathartic and enlightening and emotionally cleansing for the leaders than helpful to the engaged couples who witnessed them. . . . We could not help but conclude that this emotionalism had the effect of moving the spotlight of the weekend away from the engaged couples and onto the leaders themselves, the very antithesis of the retreat's purpose.

The attendees found the session on sexuality to be particularly offensive, with its "discussions of orgasms, foreplay, the importance of experimenting with lovemaking positions, the role simultaneous climax has played in this particular couple's marriage, and news from 'Tim' that 'Missy' fantasizes about 'doing it in the hay' and that 'Wayne' has recently been quite successful in bringing 'Roxie' to orgasm." The program, said the couple, "had more in common with a seminar conducted by Dr. Ruth than it did a Church-sponsored retreat for engaged couples."

When the pair then attempted to leave the retreat, they were told that they must remain in order to receive their diploma. Of course, presentation of the retreat diploma is another compulsory prerequisite for the marriage ceremony. The couple added: "To force everyone to be a party to this sort of information—to strip individuals of the right not to listen to a couple's bedroom experiences—at a mandatory retreat is both degrading and embarrassing. Clearly, couples who want to discuss such things could do so in private, and in private with their priest." The groom later asked: "Considering that engaged couples are now required to meet with married couples prior to being wed, are we to conclude that individuals are now required to suffer the degrading experience of listening to a couple's discourse on foreplay and climax in order to be married in the Catholic Church?"

Indeed. It is time to dispense with requiring intended couples to run the psychosocial gauntlet—and in its place restore prudent, time-tested norms of uplifting preaching, charitable solicitude, and commonsense preparation to help new couples. Yea, verily, what God has joined together let no behavioral scientist put asunder.

Anne Marie Morgan writes from Chesterfield, Virginia.



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

My Aunt & Unamuno

by Ralph de Toledano

In the summer of 1929, my aunt Zarita Nahon, a philologist and teacher of languages, traveled from Biarritz to Hendaye, en route to Tangier to collect the medieval Spanish balladry, lost in Spain but still extant in the coastal cities of Morocco, for the anthropologist Franz Boas. She was making a detour to visit Miguel de Unamuno—scholar, poet, and philosopher—who had chosen Hendaye *ville*, as poor and barren as Hendaye *plage* was rich and elegant, for his exile.

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Walking through the dirty streets, crowded with poorly dressed women and children and smelling of frying oil, she found it inconceivable that this great writer could have been expelled from his position as rector of the historic Spanish university at Salamanca, because of his opposition to Alfonso XIII and his prime minister, Primo de Rivera. Unamuno loved Spain as a patriot, a champion of personal and intellectual liberty, not as a political partisan. What could he be doing in this drab little town? Had he buried himself in his books, looking sadly and hopelessly to Spain? His letters to my aunt had given her no clue.

Miguel de Unamuno had been condemned to 16 years in prison for *lèse majesté*, a sentence that was never carried out, and taken on 24-hour notice under guard to Fuerteventura island—"a bit of the Sahara in the Atlantic Ocean," he had described it. The Spanish government had suggested to him that he could easily escape to Portugal, but he refused, preferring the dignity of exile. "If I return to Spain," he would tell my aunt, "it will be to accuse."

At the end of a cobbled street, the Avenue Pierre Loti, my aunt found Unamuno's house—a small, green-shuttered cottage surrounded by a tidy garden. There a bright-eyed Spanish maid told her, "*No, el señor Unamuno no está*. He is in the *café*. Oh, he does not return until night. *El café Central*, on the square. It is not hard to find."

The cafe was dirty, dark, disreputable, and very noisy. The noise came from a table where Unamuno—powerful, wiry, blue-eyed, and tanned—was arguing with a half-dozen men in work clothes—intellectual and proletarian in debate. On seeing my aunt, Unamuno said a few words to his worker friends, who quickly moved to other tables. Then, almost without prelude, he launched into a discourse on my ancestors, who had written their books and sung their songs in Toledo, and stood in the court of the Catholic kings until the Inquisition drove them out of a Spain they never forgot.

My aunt, who held court in a New York apartment until she died quietly at age 102, remembered that "Unamuno's eyes never left mine. When Don Miguel spoke to you, he did not talk at you but into you. He was most interested not in what he was saying but in what you were thinking and feeling, and how you reacted to his words. He loved people as much as he loved ideas."

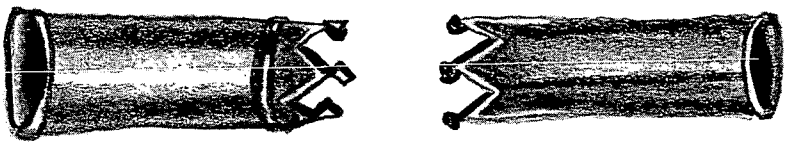
My aunt Zarita was more interested in Unamuno's views about the coming revolution in Spain, about America, about what he was doing, than about her ancestors. She knew all about them. When she mentioned America, he laughed. "Every summer, a man brings over a caravan of teachers to Hendaye," he said. "Recently I took occasion to ask them about some American writers—Parkman, Henry Adams, others. They did not know of them. That puzzled me." He could not understand how teachers, entrusted with the education of the young, could be ignorant of their own writers, their own culture. And he was amused because he realized that all they knew of him was what the guide told them. "Ten minutes with a philosopher named Oo-na-moo-no," he parodied, "and then we will look at a church."

When my aunt referred to King Alfonso, Unamuno made a small gesture. "*Es un bucólico, y más, un mentiroso*"—he is a bumpkin, and more, a liar. "He never tells the truth, or if he does it is because he does not know that it is the truth. But after all, he is a Hapsburg, a foreigner." (The pun then current among anti-monarchists was that Alfonso was Spain's Bourbonic plague.) As for Primo de Rivera, who tried too ineptly to save the monarchy, "he hasn't many ideas and he is *un envidioso*"—an envious man. "That is a very Spanish trait." He thought for a moment and then added, "The French attribute all our troubles to *le clergé*. *Le clergé!* But it would be more correct to say the military. Is there anything more stupid, more pompous, in all of Spain than the military?"

"How is it, Don Miguel," my aunt asked, "that a professor of Greek literature should have political convictions strong enough to arouse Alfonso and Rivera?"

"I have no political program. But the national problem, the regeneration of Spain, concerns many of us. I am not interested in legal or state remedies. With Ganivet, I go directly to the people, to the race and its spirit. To

LIBERAL ARTS



EUROPE COMES OF AGE

Unconventional religions are on the rise in Europe. Don Lattin of the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported last summer that low church attendance and a changing world order have led Europeans to search for spiritual alternatives, such as occult sects, neo-pagan movements, and holistic healing centers. When the Berlin Wall was coming down, the first encounter many East Germans had with the West was the Church of Scientology, which posted staff members along the wall to hand out free German-language copies of *Dianetics*. "Europe has become the growth market for new religious movements," said J. Gordon Melton, director of the Center for the Study of American Religion in Santa Barbara. Some Europeans see this as a blend of "New Age" spiritualism and a revival of Renaissance magic and occultism, while others have attributed it to an outgrowth of the American hippie culture of the 1960's. According to Melton, "Gurus who settled in America and built a movement here are now expanding into Europe."

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renew their ideas, to burn those ideas into their souls, to spiritualize them—that is what I would do, what I am trying to do even here in Hendaye," said the author of *El sentimiento trágico de la vida*.

"Utopia?" my aunt murmured.

"Yes! Utopia!" he said emphatically. "We need Utopias and Utopians. They are the salt of the spirit."

He was quiet for a moment, then he said, "Conversation is more fruitful than meditation. The reactions of those with whom I talk force me to adjust to them or to resist them. I am stimulated by provocation or dissent." What he missed most in his exile, he told my aunt, was *la pared*—the wall against which he could throw his ideas and watch them rebound. "I remember one day walking with a friend and discussing some topic. He pressed me with his objections. I answered him and then shouted gleefully, 'What a good answer I've given you! How exact! How to the point.'

"My friend laughed at what he thought was my vanity. But, you see, my answer had surprised *me*. *La pared*. 'The fact is,' I said to my friend, 'that what I just said to you is as new to me as it is to you. I must have had the solution in mind, but it was vague and confused. Just making the effort to overcome your objections made it take form and reveal itself to me.'

"In our written work as well as in conversation," he continued, "we repeat ourselves. Don't you think that the successive works of a great writer often happen to be no more than successive editions, more or less altered, of the same book? The more original a writer is and the more he probes within, the more he repeats himself. The greatest geniuses have been people of few and simple ideas, expressed in superb form. So any book—whether it be a novel, an essay, or a poem—is only the same fundamental thought developed in multiple forms. And so a writer, in his attempt to transmit that central thought, goes on encircling it more and more, finding new forms of expression and searching for the most exact. When this writer, any writer, has found the most permanent form, he survives."

When my aunt, who had read much of Unamuno's writings, confessed to a lack of familiarity with his poetry, Don Miguel was a little hurt. Poetry, he said, was his greatest passion. In his poems, he felt, he had expressed the richest and most intimate part of himself, of his sensibility and spirit. Almost sadly, he deplored the fame that had come from his other work. And diffidently, a slight flush on his face, he took a small notebook from his pocket.

"I am preparing a *cancionero*," he said. "May I read you this poem that I just wrote?"

"The strong, quixotic, combative Miguel de Unamuno," my aunt recalled years later, "disappeared and the mystic took his place."

He read delicately, the emotion surging through the rhythms of Spanish verse. He read another poem and another, ending with the evocation of the painting of Christ by Velázquez that hangs in the Prado. That painting he considered the highest artistic expression of Catholicism, of "that Christ who is always dying but never dies." He allowed my aunt to take down a few of the verses, and she remembered one of them when she stood before the Velázquez Christ in the Prado:

O es que una nube negra de
los cielos
ese negror le dió a tu cabellera
de nazareno, cual de mústio
sáuce
de una noche sin luna sobre
el río . . .

In Salvador de Madariaga's somewhat romanticized translation:

Or was it then that a black
cloud from Heaven
Such blackness gave to your
Nazarene's hair,
As of a languid willow o'er
the river
Brooding in moonless night?

They were interrupted by an affectionate "*Que tal*, Don Miguel" from a student who had come to talk to him. Don Miguel stood up to give him an *abrazo* and my aunt left. Two years later, the royal car of Alfonso XIII passed through Hendaye carrying into exile the Hapsburg dynasty. Miguel de Unamuno returned to a Spain that did not share his vision and that in five years would be torn by civil war.

There is a footnote. Decades later, my aunt Zarita turned over to me what she had set down of that conversation with Unamuno and a few of his letters. I gave her a copy of his *Cancionero*, the deeply moving poems he had written in celebration of his love of Spain and of the Catholic Christ—a small paperbound book I had picked up in some bookstall, I do not remember where. She turned the pages slowly, reading, and then she looked up at me with a lovely smile.

"He must have remembered," she said. "I told him of those old Spanish ballads, the *romances*, which I was planning to collect in Tangier. I told him how my mother sang them to me when I was a child. And here it is—*'la voz de Estrella.'*" My grandmother Estrella had sung them to me as well.

Ralph de Toledano writes from Washington, D.C.

LIBERAL ARTS

REMEMBER DEFECTIONS?

Cuban baseball pitcher Rene Arocha left his family and defected to America last summer in order to pursue his dream of becoming a Major League Baseball player. The *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* reported that Arocha was the first Cuban baseball player to defect in 30 years. Robert Valdes Perez, director of sports in Regla, was disappointed. "A Cuban athlete should stay here. They are given everything free from age 8." Perez said the state provided Arocha with a new house when he was married and provided 250 pesos (about $125 a month) to play baseball all year long. "No other country in the world treats a baseball player like we do."

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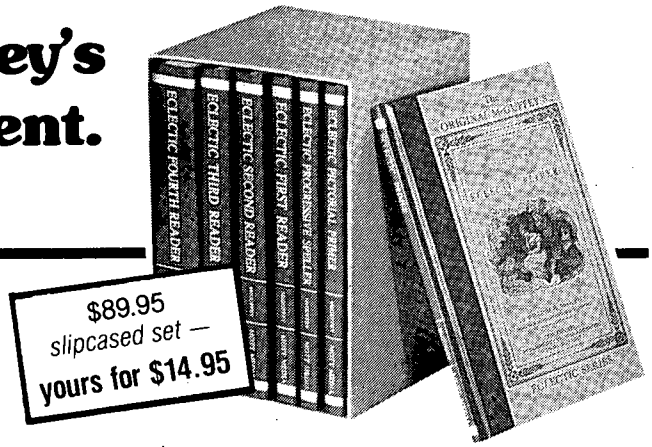

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